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ROME & JUNE 1946

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Dr. Stanisław Dąbrowski

The Akkerman Steppes

by ADAM MICKIEWICZ (1798-1855)

*I sail a sea where waters never ran,
My wagon like a boat with plunge and dip
Cuts waves of green and floods of flowers, to slip
Past rosy isles of wild cornelian.
Night falls. No road or hill — My eyes must scan
The stars by which the sailor guides his ship.
That distant cloud, the Dniester's gleaming strip;
That star, the morning lamp of Akkerman.
We halt, flow still! I hear the cranes that pass,
So high the falcon cannot see. I hear
The butterfly that rocks upon the grass,
The slipp'ry-breasted serpent where it crawls,
So still it is, a voice might reach my ear
From Lithuania — onward! No one calls...*

« The Slavonic Review ».

FATHER PETER

by KAZIMIERZ TETMAJER

« Let me see, Pan Diengielewski, what is your code or arms — Chicory? »

« Ozory, if you please, Your Reverence — that of the Ozory family. »

« Aha! Well, who'd have thought it! Now, what do you say to a glass of vodka, Pan Diengielewski of the Ozorys, organist of Klonice? »

« Well, as Your Reverence is so kind, I have no objections. »

« And which shall it be today? — Caraway or aniseed? »

« Well, really, if I may venture to say so, Your Reverence, considering that to morrow is Tuesday it would seem to appear that the caraway is the most advisable and proper. »

« Oh, what a high-flown style! One would think you have helped Slowacki in the composition of his great poems. But what has that to do with it, Pan Diengielewski? »

« If I may venture to ask, Your Reverence, what has what to do with what? »

« Caraway with Tuesday. »

« Well, if I may venture to say so, Your Reverence, perhaps, after all, it may have nothing to do with it. »

« Then why did you say it had, Pan Diengielewski? »

« While... Oh, Your Reverence must always have everything just so. It's like being drilled.... »

« Ho, ho, Pan Diengielewski, do you remember how I drilled you in the courtyard here before the parsonage while the storm was brewing. How I told you to march and handle a musket? Although, I must confess, I never myself knew how to march, for I served in the cavalry and carried a sword instead of a musket. Do you remember, Pan Diengielewski, what a figure of a man I was as officer of the Fifth Lancers, under Prince Konstanty? That chestnut horse I had ... Do you remember, Pan Diengielewski? »

« How can I remember that, Your Reverence,? At that distant period of time, the respected author of my existence was still, if I may venture to say so, a young and innocent virgin. »

« True, Pan Diengielewski; you are somewhat younger, than I am. How old are you? »

« Well, as my birth certificate records, Your Reverence, I was born in 32, son of Kaspar Matthew Ozory-Diengielewski and Kleofasia, his wife. »

« And you were born with those yellow moustaches, Pan Diengielewski? »

« Uh,! Of course not, Your Reverence! How could my sainted mother have brought me as a young infant into this vail of tears with the attributes of a grown man? »

« Well, there was Roman Dentatus who was born with teeth, so why could not there be a Diengielewski « Mustachetus »? Are you not as good as any pagan? »

« I should say so, Your Reverence, — and besides, as a nobleman... »

« You see. And I was born in 1799, and now we are in 1886; how many years do I want to a hundred, Pan Diengielewski of the Chicorys? »

« Ozorys, if I may venture to say so, Your Reverence. »

« Ozory, then. Well, how many? »

« Well, if Your Reverence were ninety, it would be nine. »

« And if I were a hundred, none at all, eh,? »

« Oh,... Your Reverence must always have everything just so. »

« If I take from ten ... »

« Well, how many? Quick! »

« Oh, Your Reverence! So quick... »

« Why, Pan Diengielewski, you are as nimble at reckoning as a Jew at dancing? Let me help you. I want 13 years to a hundred. Now, how old am I? »

« I was just about to say, Your Reverence, that by the grace of God Your Reverence is 87. »

« Thirteen, Pan Diengielewski, thirteen is an unlucky number. But as true as I am a noble, as true as my name is Peter Zalanski, I will not let off the Almighty even one day of those hundred years. Am I not still hale and hearty? You remember last Sunday, when I thundered from the pulpit towards Pan Boleslaw Karaskowski of Wolka, who had fallen asleep in his pew, and made him jump so, that his spectacles tumbled from his nose! Oho, I am not yet ready to give up! Have you tried the wodka, Pan Diengielewski? »

« Well, Your Reverence, to tell the truth, how could I? Your Reverence deigned only to have the goodness to propose... »

« Then get the decanter from the sideboard. And as today is Monday

and to-morrow is Tuesday get out two decanters. Not that one, the other... that's it. First a little glass of aniseed, than the caraway. »

« As Your Reverence is so kind... »

« How do you find it? »

« If I may venture so, Your Reverence, extremely excellent. »

« Now another. »

« As Your Reverence is so kind... »

« Have a bit of ginger-bread. How is it, good? »

« Mmm! Delicious! »

« Well, you had better trot off home, Pan Diengielewski, and don't forget to give my greetings to Pani Diengielewski and Panna Anastasia Paprykowska, her niece, and in the meantime I will say my morning prayers. God be with you, Pan Diengielewski of the Chicorys. »

« Ozorys, if I may venture to say so, Your Reverence. »

And Pan Diengielewski, wiping his long whitening moustaches on his sleeve, kissed Father Peter's hand and went away.

Father Peter crossed himself, folded his hands together on his breast and began to walk up and down the room with slow, measured steps, murmuring prayers under his breast, while Zagrai, the old hound, who had been lying fast asleep under the sofa, opened first one eye, then the other, rose to his feet, stretched himself, yawned, and according to his daily habit of years began to follow his master step by step. From time to time the aged priest, irritated by the flies, brushed them away with his hand and now and again Zagrai snapped at them, and they walked together thus until it was time for breakfast.

At intervals while he was praying Father Peter would gaze at the walls, where hung beautifully polished guns and branching antlers; at the pots of flowering hyacinths and azaleas in the windows or at the riot of hollyhocks and sunflowers in the garden. Now and again he would glance involuntarily at the pipe-rack with its row of chibouks with their shining meerschaum bowls, or without interrupting his whispered prayers he would halt for a moment before the bookcase, straighten the books and walk slowly on, followed by the dog. From time to time he also glanced outdoors, for the farmhands in their red vests were busy in the yard. The steward was shouting orders, the young dogs were chasing the chickens, and a tame crane, known by the name of Marcin, was scaring the foals and challenging the turkey-cocks. There was plenty of noise and movement. Farm-maids wearing bright-hued kerchiefs on their heads came and went, singing some languorous ditty; the peacocks flaunted their gorgeous tails, gobbling and trailing their wings on the ground; flocks of pigeons fluttered up from the roofs, ranging in wide circles above the houses. The morning sun shone down on all this scene, glittering amid the foliage of the lindens and the birches.

His folded hands held before the lips, Father Peter, a grey-headed, quiet figure, gazed through the window without ceasing his prayers, and when at length he had whispered the last word he did not immediately cross himself, but remained a long time near the window, still looking out. Then, after making the sign of the cross on his breast, he drew it also in the air, blessing from his room the fields of Klonice, its forests, its waters teeming with fish, with people at work in the fields and the cattle pasturing in the meadows.

It was often thus.

After drinking his coffee, Father Peter would light his pipe — a handsome meerschaum on a very long, cherry-wood stem with a big costly, amber mouthpiece, the gift of the dead Squire of Klonice, — a after a few whiffs he would lean back in his armchair and doze, sometimes muttering as if he were dreaming and wagging his forefinger in the way he always did when recalling old time.

The experiences of his life provided plenty of material for dreams: a radiantly happy childhood in Zalany, service under Prince Konstanty, the insurrection, exile, long wanderings and finally several decades spent in service of God, — a hard service fulfilled in a soldierly spirit, strictly, untiringly...

The former brilliant captain of cavalry had not entered the priesthood because he felt the vocation, and this he acknowledged openly. « I was born, Sir, » he would say, « with as much vocation for the priesthood as my farm wench, who can carry a sack of potatoes on her back, has for the ballet. I was young, good-looking — ho, ho! — by no means poor and in addition lively, thoughtless, frivolous — a true Polish noble as well as cavalry officer. But I found out wherein we had done wrong. When my servant, Sobek, a lad from Zalany, had failed to polish my sword, to my satisfaction, or to bring me my boots at the proper time, I clouted him. My father, my grandfather, my great-grandfather — all the Zalanskis for the same and similar causes punished their Sobeks in the same way. That is why my servant deserted me before the first battle that is why Stanislas, my first cousin, was dragged from his horse by his own valet, and than so hacked and butchered by the peasants that he was unrecognizable. I went to my expiation for my own sins and the sins of the other Zalanskis. I went to serve those whom I felt I had wronged... I think you, Sir, that it came easy to me to give up everything — the whole warm, smiling world, to done the robes of a priest, and to go to live in the country to baptize the children of rustics and confess toothless old women? Sometimes, Sir, I thought I could not stand it. When the Hungarian war broke out I was wellnigh ready to hang up my cassock and rush off across the Carpathians. But I said to myself: « You volunteered in the service of God and you must serve

Him. » The God's service is a hard service — there is no cheating Him. When He's gracious He's very gracious, but when He's angry... Ho ho! When He's angry everybody turns tail! Even the Archangel Michael, although He is a great warrior and gave the Devil himself a drubbing and moves with celebrate clinking of his sword — even he, when it God's presence, holds its quietly in his hands and walks carefully, as in an Imperial palace. And what is a poor mortal — even were he a canon — compared to an Archangel? Ho ho! But afterwards... afterwards not all the treasures in the world could have tempted me to duff my cassock and abandon my parish. What of first I understood as a penance, as an expiation, going among the simple peasants — I, a magnate and officer of the cavalry, giving them my days and my nights, all my life — what at first was a penance I grew afterward to love... And I came to love also all things divine and began to try to win these souls to God. I thought to myself — for each soul in the first battle — « What the devil is all that to me? ». He would not have deserted me. So you see, Sir, I can say with truth, that I have fulfilled the service for which I volunteered; I can say with truth, that I have been a good priest, a good shepherd of souls. Had anyone prophesied 60 years ago, when I broke in the great Turkish mare for Panna Jadwiga Karsnicka, and afterwards, God forgive me, on that same mare stole her away from my friend Hilary Rozczewski — had anyone told me then that I should be laid in my coffin in a cassock, I who thought to go to the vale Jehoshaphat with the epaulettes of a general... Ho ha! Man shoots, but God guides the bullets... Ho ho! Where is Pan Diengielewski? Is Pan Diengielewski anywhere about? ».

The aged priest could not bear to be even a few hours without the organist. A descendant of the lesser nobility of Lithuania, Pan Diengielewski had wandered thence with his father, Kasper Ozory-Diengielewski, and had found asylum in the manor-house at Klonice. At first he helped the steward of the estate with the accounts, but as he had no head for figures and played divinely on the flute, he devoted himself to music and became the organist of Klonice. He could draw such touching strains from the organ that one fine Sunday Panna Krystyna Kolaskiewicz, the lady's maid from the manor-house, fainted during Mass and finally became Pani Diengielewski and at the same time a member of the nobility. Father Peter discussed everything with Pan Diengielewski, from oats and politics to astronomy and diseases of plants. He rallied him teasing him about his pride of race and turning Ozory into Chicory — a joke that had lasted at least 30 years and never lost its savour.

On weekdays Pan Diengielewski wore a black neckcloth, a long snuff-coloured, coat, a spotted waistcoat, and striped trousers. But on Sunday and holidays, and on the nameday of the Pope and of the Father

Peter, he wore at dark blue neckcloth, a new, snuff-coloured coat, a grey cloth waistcoat and new striped trousers. A poked cap, a red handkerchief with bronze spots, a horn snuff-box, a silver-knobbed cane and a brass seal with his arms completed his toilet. Father Peter had a great affection for him.

The estate resembled Noah's Ark. Beside the usual domestic animals, Father Peter had a small menagerie where deer, hares, and strange, foreign geese lived in perfect harmony. This menagerie and also the garden were under the care of all the old men and women, all the cripples and orphans that could be found in the vicinity. Father Peter sought out all these needy ones, gave them food and shelter, taught them. His own needs being few — fine boots and cassocks, for which he had a weakness were his greatest extravagance — and having, besides his stipend as Canon, a considerable fortune of his own, he fed and clothed numberless poor people. « My neighbour, Father Wadzik, » he would say, « when he was restoring the church in Nowosiolek, forbade the painters to walk the scaffoldings for fear they might fall against the windows and break the panes, which are costly; he scrapes together every farthing, never gives the dogs a bit of meat, and all this so that after his death the peasants may be able to give the church a new zinc roof and build a new bell-tower. And I say that my way is best. God does not care about the roof on the church. He is concerned only about the souls that pray in the church; and whether the bells swing higher or lower than the linden trees is all the same to Him so long as human hearts are lifted heavenward. Our church also is in need of repairs, but my first task is to fill the orphan's empty stomach, not the hole in the church roof. »

Father Peter had a big shady garden, and many of the trees that now flourished there had been planted by his own hands, for he had lived in the parish of Klonice more than half a century. He knew all about fruit-growing and produced fruit for the pleasure of giving it away to the squire and to his neighbours. Flowers he had in profusion. Always, when he was busy among them, he talked to them. Some he would praise some would scold, upon others he would shower pity. His monologues were worth hearing: « Oho, my little narcissus! See now, you have shot up so high, that you got top-heavy, and you have broken down. Wait a moment, I'll prop you up. There, now you'll grow better! Hold yourself straight — so. And this sunflower, the rascal, how he is lording it! He might be some wonderful foreign tulip, he's so proud! And you, little creeper, what are you doing here? Did you ever! Sprawling all over the bed as if you had no stick to climb! Oh dear, oh dear! Little sweet-pea, you want to make me do something wicked. Just try! And these lilies-of-the-valley, how lovely — like young virgins!

Now, now, you asters, don't be so saucy, don't push yourself forward! Ho, ho! I know you. Was I not in the Lancers! Ho, ho. »

And sometimes, when he had enjoyed a good nap after dinner, moved by reminiscences of old times, Father Peter would be full of sprightly enthusiasm, and as, with the years he had become a little childish, Pan Diengielewski often had rather a hard time of it. Just before the Austro-Prussian war, tucking up the tails of his cassock, had seized his old Lancers sword, and in the court yard of the parsonage had drilled volunteers, among whom was also pan Diengielewski, at that time still assistant to the manor-house steward and a bachelor. Now from time to time the aged priest was curious to see if the organist had not forgotten the drill.

« Take the chibouk », he would say, « not that one, the other the longest, and give me the short one. Now — attention! March! Right! Left! Halt! ».

The organist, perspiring, panting, would stand as stiff as a pocker before Father Peter, who would criticize his bearing, giving him little pokes under the chin with his pipe, and pulling down the grey cloth waistcoat over the striped trousers.

These martial exercises, although they took place but rarely, greatly irritated the housekeeper, Panna Katarzyna Capikówna, as being « beneath the dignity of a priest, and likely to injure the health of his Reverence. » For some time, however, she said nothing.

But as ill luck would have it, it happened on one occasion, that Father Peter, who was formerly a famous swordsman and had fought eleven duels, and was only once wounded (a mere scratch on his left ear from pan Bogusław Chomialski, who himself got a most terrible slash across the face) it happened, that he took it into his head to see, if his arm was still in working order.

« Take the other pipe, the short one, pan Diengielewski, » he said, raising his armchair and removing the bowl from the one he had just been smoking.

« But why, Your Reverence, if I may venture to ask? »

« You'll see. *Parez la quarte!* »

« What do you say, your Reverence? »

« Defend your fat paunch on the left! »

The organist was completely bewildered.

« God bless my soul, if I may venture to say so! But why, Your Reverence? »

« Ask no questions, but obey. Put your weight on the left leg. A little more — Good! Now bend. Chest forward. Ugh, what a fat belly you have! At your age my waist was as slender as panna Kłocja Tyminska's, to whom I sent a present of dried pears, the day before yest-

crday, her seventeenth birthday. Chin up. Right arm free. One. two! Chest out, the arm so, then so. D'you see? I stand so — you, so! One, two! Gardez vous! »

« Yes, Your Reverence! »

« Attention,! En garde! »

The organist groaned, and the quarte was so vigorous that it touched not only the organist, but also two pots of flowering fuchsias in the window, which toppled to the floor with a tremendous clatter.

Father Peter stood gazing at the fragments as Panna Capikówna burst into the room, red as a peony, scandalized and furious.

« Your Reverence! » she cried.

« What is it? » inquired Father Peter somewhat sheepishly, but trying to put a good face on a bad business.

« It's a sin and a shame! What would people say, if they were to see you? Your Reverence, like a jacknapes, lunging about the room with a pipe! A Pan Diengielewski as well, who ought to know better! The father of a family, and calls himself a noble! If it happens again, I won't give you any coffee; as true as I live you shall have no coffee! »

« Bah,! A woman's threats are about as terrible to a man as rain is to a frog! » scoffed Father Peter, taking heart.

« Woman or not, it's all the same, » scolded Panna Katarzyna, « and what I've said I've said! » And in a high dudgeon she stormed out of the room.

Father Peter was nevertheless happy — and impenitent.

« Women love to scold, » he muttered, « and in any case my arm is still limber. Ho, ho! If need were... »

During the warm summer afternoons, Father Peter loved to sit under the ancient yewtree outside the grounds, and survey the world at large. From there he could see the golden grain, mottled with blue cornflowers and red poppies; the fields of red and white clover, the green meadows, gay with flowers of many hues, shimmering in the sunlight. He could see the dark forest as through a trembling, transparent veil of golden greenish light and somewhere in the distance the misty blue of the mountains. And not far off he could see a great lake, calm, serene, glistening in the sunlight like a shield of silver with here and there patches of blueish-grey or greyish-violet, and waterly lilies near the brink fringed by thickets of rustling sedge. Wild ducks swam on the lake, dark dots on its bright surface; above them hovered broad-winged herons and flocks of noisy lapwings; and the waters spread out widely, far into the land, peaceful, dreamy, gently, flurried by the breeze.

All this was steeped in light, nimbed as it were, with boundless space; and always still, infinitely still, as if absorbed in listening to the

wind and the murmur of the meadows and the waters, full of sweet languor and longings, full of strange ecstasy.

The rapt gaze of Father Peter at first distinguished the wheatfields from the meadows, the forests from the water, but slowly the manifold expanse began to dissolve, mingle and blend in a uniform haze — a sun-steeped, celestial blue. The wheat, the flowers, the grass, the calm ripples of the lake, the herons in graceful flight, the flocks of noisy lapwings, the transparent clouds, the pale blue of the sky — all this filled his eyes, kindling therein a light infinitely sweet and serene. To Father Peter it seemed that what he now saw was not real material world, but the soul of that world; a mist coloured like the earth, rather than the earth itself.

And then this vision of the soul rather than of the eyes began to fade and resolve itself into scenes belonging to the past. The vast, billowy sea dotted with the white sails of ships spread before him, and the wide, limitless spaces of the desert. He heard the rustling of the cedars of Lebanon and of the palms of Arabian oasis; the great silent Pyramids appeared, and volcanoes with flaming summits, and Eastern cities full of colour, and that dead Roman metropolis, rescued from its earthy tomb and great multitude and strange beasts... At such moments his mind would be full of a chaos of impressions dimmed by the passage of the years, absorbed, lost in musings. And sometimes he would not stir until little Ignace, a 7-year old foundling and the old man's favourite, was purposely sent by the housekeeper to rouse him from his dreams by tugging at the sleeve of his cassock.

« Yer Rev'rence! »

« Ah... What is it? »

« Yer Rev'rence was asleep? »

« No, I was only dozing. »

« The housekeeper told me for to say please will Yer Rev'rence come. »

« Yes, yes, at once. »

« Yer Rev'rence! »

« Well, what now? »

« Does the Lord Jesus walk about Heavens like Yer Rev'rence does on earth? »

« Certainly. »

« And does He go barefoot? »

« No, doubt. It is warm there, why should he wear boots? »

« And is He big? »

« Ho, ho! As big as the world! »

« Then when the thunderbolts fall, do they drop down through His toes. »

« No doubt, no doubt. »
« And is He good? »
« Ho, ho! Like honey! »
« And is honey good? »
« Well, have you never tasted it? »
« And God? »
« God is also good. »
« Is He better than the Lord Jesus? »
« Oh, no, the same, the same. »
« And is God big? »
« As big as the Lord Jesus. »
« Yer Rev'rence! »
« What now? »

« The housekeeper told me for to say please will Yer Rev'rence come. »

« At once, at once. »

« Come. Gimme yer hand. Slow-ly 'cause ye're old. »

And Ignace would take Father Peter by the hand, and together they would follow the path back to the house, talking busily and very seriously on the way.

Occupied with the service of God and humankind—a hard service for the curate, who passed his days and nights in studying theological works, was a little aid to him. Father Peter had not much time to think of death, especially as he always declared, that he would not let God of even a single day of the hundred years that he had allotted to himself. But one autumn evening, when the sun had slipped behind the horizon and the darkening sky was still streaked with purple, Father Peter, who for a long time had been sitting in silence in the porch, leading into the garden, apparently dozing, suddenly turned his head towards the organist, who was sitting opposite and in an unusually serious tone remarked:

« Pan Diengielevski, I think it is time for me to go ».

« Where, Your Reverence, if I may venture to ask? »

« Farther than from here to the vestry. There... » and he pointed towards the cemetery, its white walls glimmering faintly in the dusk.

The organist started.

« How can Your Reverence say such a thing! If I may venture to say, it is even unseemly. It is tempting Providence! »

« Well, You will see, Pan Diengielevski, organist of Klonice, that I must go. It is time, and I shall have to let God off those 13 years. »

« Oh, I wish Your Reverence wouldn't say such things! »

« It is time to go. I confessed myself this morning, and took the Blessed Sacrament. I am ready. I will send for the curate, but you must apologize for disturbing him as he is probably poring over the

"Summa Theologica" or the "Imitation of Christ". It is such as he who should be made canons, not and old gossip like me. »

The air was chilly and pungent with the odour of autumnal decay, and one could hear the gentle, monotonous rustling of the wind among the trees.

« Pan Diengielevski! »

« Yes, Your Reverence? I am listening. »

« Listen, but not to me. Listen to the world. Do you hear what a rustling and murmuring there is abroad? It seems to me, that I hear the working of all this mighty machine of which God is the Maker and the eternal Engineer. The planets and the sun turn on their axes, creation goes its way, rustling and murmuring. The whole world is full of the sound of movement. And He, the Great Builder, listens and rejoices. Only thing, Matthew Tymothy Ozory-Diengielewski, organist of Klonice, what a mighty and wonderful sound it must be! You think, it is like Kuba Michalov's windmill, but it is like thousands, millions of such windmills. Ho, ho! Like all the waves of the Atlantic and all the winds of the Sahara put together. Listen... »

« I am listening, Your Reverence! »

« Do you hear? »

« I hear the murmur of the wind in the garden. »

« And the murmur of the world, of that enormous machine, do you hear it? »

« No, Your Reverence, I do not think to hear it. »

For a while Father Peter was silent, and then again began to speak.

« Pan Diengielewski, open the window to the north. Open it wide, and let in the scent of the fields. Up there... If God is merciful... it must be very beautiful: a marvellous brightness, choirs of angels, all perfumes of Paradise and wonders without end. But the fields of Klonice will not be there, nor the scents from my garden... Eternity is a long time, but 50 years also count for something... You must have those young creepers tied up, and see that the pears-trees are well wrapped in straw for the winter... Ho, ho, such sweet smells will there be! Pan Diengielevski, I have been in the Holy Land and in Arabia, and in Italian orange groves, but nowhere was there such fragrance as long ago in Zalany, and afterwards here in Klonice. Pan Diengielevski! »

« Yes, Your Reverence. »

« Is the moon up? »

« It would seem so, Your Reverence. »

« Is it bright? It is hard for me to turn my head to look. »

« Yes, Your Reverence. »

« God be thanked. I would not like to die during bad weather. »

« Uh, why does Your Reverence.— »

« Be still, organist Pan Diengielevski, be still. The moon will light the soul, make a bright the pass way for it. And it will be well, if it ascends from the porch. That would be almost the same as in the open fields. In our family not many have died in their beds. They died on the battlefields. It's just as well there are no more, for who knows, they might become like many others... And of what use is nobility of race without nobility of soul? Pan Diengielevski! »

« Yes, Your Reverence. »

« You must dress me in my new cassock, the one with the silk lining, and put the silken sash round it and fasten it with the golden pin engraved with my arms. Have my new boots polished, and put round my neck my canon's chain, and on my breast my military orders. Leave the signet on my finger let it be buried with me. Scatter flowers over me: plenty of marjoram, because it smells so sweet, and narcissi round my head. And my sword, Pan Diengielevski, you must break, for I am the last of my race... What's this, Pan Diengielevski,—you are blubbing? »

« Uh-uh-hu, Your Reverence wrings my heart... »

« Or better... Listen, Pan Diengielevski, it's a pity to break the sword; put it in the folds of my cassock, but so, that the curate cannot see it. With the Crucifix in my hand I shall seem nothing, but a priest, but there, at my side, will be my sword... Do you smell the scents from my garden, Pan Diengielevski? »

« Y-y-yes, Your Reverence. »

« My will is there, in my desk. Every thing is in order. Don't forget, Pan Diengielevski, to water the flowers in the pots and to look after the garden. Sell nothing, get rid of nothing. There are funds for everything: for the old men and women, for the orphans, and the cripples, for Marcin and Zagrai. Everything is to be as it has been always, until it dies, or until it grows up and goes out into the world. I had always the same heart to all the world. For me a motherless fawn is as worthy of pity as a little child. God created everything. He loves everything and knows everything. Pan Diengielevski! »

« Yes, Your Reverence? »

« The bays are to be sent to Topolica, to Pan Strzemieski. Upon no account are they to be sold. He will look after them, for they were ridden by the last of the Zalanskis. My grandfather once, when he was a little drunk, shot a silver coffeepot from the hand of Panna Bronislava Strzemieska, and afterwards threw himself at her feet and begged for forgiveness. And she was my grandmother. That is how we are related. The bays go to Topolica, and the pair of greys are for the curate, as a souvenir. He likes riding them, and they are the only ones he is not afraid of. Arrow is for Lieutenant Kotwicz—it is a cavalry horse. God grant they may both live to obey a more thrilling trumpet call, than

that which they hear today: the Reveille in a free Poland. Ho, ho! The Marie Antoinette pipe and the bronze Napoleon inkstand are also for the curate. My estate will furnish the funds for an educational home, and to you, Pan Diengielevski, I have left in my will two bulls, 10,000 in cash, and various other things, and I give you now in your own hand this tortoise shell snuffbox with the ruby, so that you shall not forget the old priest. »

« Uh, hu, hu, Your Reverence... »

« Now, now, Pan Diengielevski, don't kneel to me, don't kiss my knees! For shame! We are all equal, and as I happen to be richer, than you, why, I can give. That is, as it should be, and there's no more to be said. And don't blubber so, Pan Diengielevski, you'll wake the people... They've been at work all day, they need rest. I too, have been hard at work for at least half my lifetime, and now it is time for me to sleep. And yet, somehow, it is strange... One knows that one must die, but it is so strange... Tomorrow I shall perhaps be no longer here, and not a leaf falls from the lindens, not a blade of grass withers... Yet everything is the work of one God, and through Him endures. Vanity of vanities is man, and nothing but vanity... A year, two years, they will remember, and then they will forget... So be it, so long as God in His mercy does not forget... Nothing else matters! »

« How well I remember the first day of my arrival here, walking through the avenue of elms in the garden... They were just the same then as they are today, with wide spreading, rustling branches. Fifty years, half a century... I hardly believe that the wheat will spring up as straight when I am gone, and yet it will... All those years! How many I have christened, how many I have buried? Oh, how bright it is? »

Through the leaves of the vine, that covered the porch, began to peep the moon. Serene and silvery, she clung to leaves and looked within, and the rustling of the wind among the leaves seemed to open and shut her eyelids. For a while Father Peter looked upward, then his head sunk to his breast, and Pan Diengielevski, whose long moustaches were wet with tears, heard him whisper:

« There's no help for it, no help for it, I must go. This evening, or tomorrow morning, I must go... How the moon looks down at me... as though announcing some heavenly light. But who knows... I was never afraid of anything, often have I looked in the face of death, and yet, now, somehow... a feeling as of dread... God be merciful to me a sinner, God be merciful to me, a sinner... Mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa. And I have also blood on my conscience... »

His head fell still lower upon his breast and for a while he was silent, but suddenly he raised and said in loud voice:

« Pan Diengielevski, when they sing "Requiescat in pace" al' the mortars in the village are to be fired. I remember... in the birch-grove, an officer of the Dragoons rushed upon me and I struck him down with my sword! But it was in a good cause, Pan Diengielevski... Turn up the wick in the lamp before the Holy Virgin... Yes, so... »

And then Father Peter closed his eyes and began to doze, but to the organist it seemed that his head fell lower and lower and that his breathing became fainter and fainter. This lasted a certain time and Pan Diengielevski, feeling uneasy, was about to call Panna Capikòwna, when the clock struck the half hour. It was half past eight, and in the doorway leaving from the hall to the porch little Ignace appeared in his white linen shirt and trousers. He went up to Father Peter, and pulling at his cassock he squeaked:

/(«Yer Rev'rence! Come! The housekeeper told me for to say please, Yer Rev'rence, it's bedtime. Come, gimme yer hand! Slowly, 'cause ye're old, Yer Rev'rence! »

But when Father Peter neither stirred nor made any reply, Ignace lifted wide eyes to Pan Diengielevski, and asked?

« Pan Diengielevski! Is, is, His Rev'rence dead? »

"Polish Short Stories"

Back home from a visit in the neighbourhood Mrs. Smith was reprimanding her husband.

"I won't go out with you anymore", she said. "You asked Mrs. Murphy how her husband stood the heat, and you knew he has been dead for three months"

"A clever man would never think of being rude to his wife".

"Clever men do not have wives".

THE STAGE - SETTING IN THE CONTEMPORARY POLISH THEATRE

(Excerpts from the lecture held at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in Rome by ZYGMUNT TONECKI, former Professor at the State Institute of the Dramatic Art in Warsaw, now with the 2nd, Polish Corps in Italy).

Since the beginning of the twentieth century we have witnessed the supremacy of the stage manager over the art of the actor, and even the author. The stage manager, as the most important person in the theatre, began to rule all the scenic elements and became the real author of the show.

In regard to the Polish theatre, the stage manager did not interfere with the creation of the show until very late; the most important part was generally reserved to the interpretation. Contrary to the tendencies prevailing in the West, the Polish stage manager was far from becoming the "boss" of the actor; this in any case would have been very difficult owing to the high level of the strong individual interpretation. For this reason, the efforts of the leading Polish stage managers were concentrated towards the realisation of the large visions of the romantic poets and their successors. This poetry, imbued with huge imagination, had nothing to do with the old "mise en scene" fables. Therefore, the realisation of these works necessitated special theatrical forms absolutely original and completely renovated. T. Pawlikowski's activity at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries marked a turning point in the history of the development of the Polish theatre. As organizer, director, producer and stage manager this highly cultured man undoubtedly laid the foundation of the modern Polish theatre.

Amongst the works which revolutionized the traditional stage-setting in Poland we must mention especially the works of the three great romantic poets: Mickiewicz, Krasinski and Slowacki, as well as their post-romantic heirs: Wyspianski, Micinski and Zeromski. The difficulties, theatrical as well as technical were important—often insuperable.

However, the stage manager had to take a particular interest in this stage repertoire because of its creative features. Such a stage manager was found in the person of Leon Schiller.

In reality amongst the different individuals working in that field, it is Leon Schiller to whom goes first credit. Considered as a whole, his activity as a stage-manager presents a perfect synthesis of the artistic tendencies of the Polish post-war theatre. One can state, that in the work of Schiller, the most noble ambitions of the Polish playwrights were to be seen. In this art Schiller was a first-class master, passing all the stages of the last 50 years since the battle fought by the naturalist camp against the bourgeois comedy and against the naturalism itself by Craig with his conception of a "pure theatre."

Leon Schiller, anxious to preserve the theatrical culture and its specific character, left his mark in the aesthetic world. On the whole, his extensive activity as stage producer reveals to us his preoccupation to imply in his realizations various types of heteroclitic leanings, often even contradictory. The essential tendency of the Schiller theatre, which we will call his fundamental idea, was the effort towards the creation of a Polish monumental style. With a remarkable perseverance he was trying to build up this style in the lapse of 20 years.

The second aspect of the work of Schiller which occupied his mind apart from monumentalism, was his activity to renew the Polish scenography and to build up a modern theatre on the basis of the synthetic realism, i. e. neorealism.

The third tendency which we find in the work of Schiller is the style applied in the theatre of the "small scenic forms." Inspired Schiller's contribution "*commedia dell'arte*", we owe to that style innumerable stage setting masterpieces in the "old theatre."

"Considered in its highest sense, the drama should include all the elements of the national authentic poetry, in the same sense that the political structure of a nation should present a picture of all its political tendencies. It is necessary that such a drama, apart from lifting one up to the higher spheres and regions, should also evoke the charming lyrical melodies of the rustic song. In this respect, in order to create a drama, which the whole Slavonic world could understand and consider its own, it is necessary to search every field of poetry lyric and epic, to find all the sentiments and ideas which ring in the hearts of the Slav people."

Adam Mickiewicz left this heritage to the Polish nation. The poet outlines the traces of the Polish visionary drama. He analyzes its road in the spiritual life of the nation and in its cultural mission. Clearly defined, we find what we today call the "monumental theatre." According to Mickiewicz's program, this idealist theatre should unite all the pure and

sublime elements of the collective soul of the people and enable the vast masses of the people to participate in the mystic festivals.

The directives of Mickiewicz have found their realism through Wyspianski, who was also the inheritor of the idea of the "monumental theatre." It is to Wyspianski that the modern theatre owes its theoretical foundations of the new theatrical aesthetic. His commentaries accompanying his dramas dealing with stage setting, and especially his essays on "Hamlet", show a master-hand, a real connoisseur of the theatre. Wyspianski's ideas concerning the stage production greatly surpassed the reform which have changed the European theatre in the past half century.

As Wyspianski tried to express the visions of Mickiewicz as a dramatical author, it was Leon Schiller who introduced them into the theatre and brought their realization in the form of scenic shows.

The first source of the Polish popular theatre was "La Pastorale." This was the point of departure towards the consolidation of the Polish "monumental theatre." The road past is full of artistic performances such as Wyspianski's "Achilleis", "Kordian" by Slowacki, "The Undivine Comedy" of Krasinski, and Mickiewicz's "Forefathers' Eve."

Leon Schiller occupied himself chiefly with the foundation of the popular theatre: pastorales, mysteries, popular ballads and the old Polish folks songs. In presenting to the stage these beginnings of the Polish theatrical scenic art, Schiller proved to be an incomparable artist. With bits of texts, with fragments already forgotten, he managed to assemble shows of an outstanding force of life, showing the ways of life of the epoch, i. e. "Voyage round Warsaw", "Bandurka", of "Blue bird's", style, etc. "The Queen of the suburb", a real *fiaba drammatica*, was performance which pleased the public by its colours and picturesque plastic, richness of ideas and musical effects. This show, which belongs to the epoch of a naive realism, turned in Schiller's hand into a mild grotesque caricature evoking a feeling similar to that of a connoisseur for old primitive things.

The mediaeval theatre was reborn in the Paschal mystery of the "Reduta" as well as in the pastorale of Ghéon "Shepherdess With the Wolves", presented at the Boguslawski theatre.

Apart from the influence of the Church, the mediaeval mysteries tempted Schiller by their grandiose drama, which he foresaw, and by the generous abundance of the elements of which the show was composed. Therefore, the artist considered the mystery as a source of the new scenic possibilities and as a type of a preparatory from which was to emerge the new stage-setting of the "monumental theatre." It must be stated that Schiller succeeded in desintegrating the essence of the mystery of which he found the character. A lucky union of the severe realism, delicate mysticism and charming lyricism is the style of this show.

Gaston Baty, the French stage producer, treated this problem in a different manner. He visioned in the mystery of the Middle Age theatre, the continuation and development of the ancient Greek and Roman theatres. Baty did not appreciate the role of Moliere who influenced greatly the transformation of the religious theatre into lay one. It is for this reason that Baty's essays, as well as those of Gheon, trying to give artificial life to the mediaeval theatre did not meet with success. Shows staged by these men did not pass beyond the level of a historical reconstruction in the theatre. In subsequent activity Baty gave up this show style and turned almost entirely to the modern and classical repertoire.

In the evolution of Leon Schiller's art, the mediaeval mysteries have been the prelude of his subsequent shows dealing mainly with the popular theatre. In this field the scenic realization of the "Fore-Fathers' Eve" of Mickiewicz was the best. Here Schiller aspired to reconstruct the whole drama and to reassemble all its different parts in one logical and harmonious unit.

The last 10 years of Schiller's activities, that is to say, up to the beginning of the war in 1939, were taken up by work on the "monumental theatre" for example in: Slowacki's "Kordian", "The Rose" by Zeromski etc. In this project Schiller was mainly occupied in modernization of problems, owing to which these problems became actual and more susceptible to the contemporary spirit. Schiller arrived at a positive result, which, consequently produced the modernization conceived in its reasonable limits.

The German stage producer, Reinhardt, strove to attain the same goal in his classical drama, but looking for the exterior and aesthetic effect he lost the problem of the drama and presented curious theatrical effects. In this we have the most refined aesthetic in the art of stage production ("King Oedipus").

The idea of the "monumental theatre" and his subsequent work on it brought Schiller to meet the famous theatrical reformer, Gordon Craig. His friendship with Craig won for Schiller the source of the scenic reform movement in the atmosphere of feverish researches and in the fight for a new theatrical aesthetic. His collaboration with Craig helped him to polish up his theatrical knowledge and opened to him a new field for his creative imagination and adaptation of new forms of expression. However, after a certain time, Schiller felt deceived because the exaggerated aestheticism of the anti-realistic Craig did not comply with his point of view of an idealist theatre.

Although the theatre of Boguslawski, where Schiller first worked, existed for only a few years, its short activity placed it among the prominent Polish stages.

Contrary to the idea that we generally have about this type of theatre

and its experimental character, the Boguslawski theatre was far from being an introduction or a preparatory work. On the contrary: Since its beginning this theatre gave the spectators, a special and original emotion. It occurred that this theatre was a form of an artistic achievement. Its character did not rely on the worship of pure art or formal tendencies exclusively. And so the scene tried to express the reality of the surrounding and to defy the social tendencies of the hour.

Among Schiller's works there are also many musical compositions, and some of his stage productions, illustrated with rhythmic music, are of the first quality. Each scene bears the stamp of Vakhtangov, who, in the composition of such shows, relied entirely on the rhythm. In his scenic realization, Schiller used music not only to intensify the emotional part of the action, but also to create an ideal accompaniment for the dramatic text. For Schiller, who more than anybody else felt and understood music, music was the integral and indispensable part of the show. In them are found reminiscences of Craig who in his stage production left a large part for music. Likewise Appia who, in his "Wort-ton drama," left the directives for a musical drama. Schiller's exceptional qualities as stage producer and composer came to light in all his scenic realizations.

The work of Leon Schiller gives us an evolution of the scenic style. His art reveals a clear definition of tendencies of the modern theatre of which he is the most complete expression. The true merit of Schiller's efforts is that he lifted to a higher artistic level all the elements of which the theatrical art is composed. Thanks to this reformer, the Polish theatrical world has enriched itself with values of great importance.

In the Polish theatre, the stage producing world was not limited to Schiller's example. Among the new stage producers of this period mention must be given the great actors Kazimierz Kaminski, Ludwik Solski, Aleksander Zelwerowicz and Juliusz Osterwa, who played very important role in the history of the Polish theatre.

Kazimierz Kaminski became known as a remarkable stage producer—a realist delving into details. Ludwik Solski, one of the most prominent Polish stage personalities united the pre-war theatrical currents with the modern ones. In 1939, although 80 years of age, he was still active and full of passion and vigour. He was responsible for a great number of works retrospective as well as contemporary shown on the stage.

The career of Aleksander Zelwerowicz, stage director of the theatres of Cracow, Lodz, Warsaw and Vilno, and director of the Theatrical Institute in Warsaw, left a great print on the stage-setting in the Polish theatre. He was a man of sharp sensibility and of a special talent consisting of transposing the artistic currents and changing them in his rich individual creative manner. Zelwerowicz devoted himself passionately to the solving of problems relative to stage-setting. As a classical stage

producer, he used the best Western European models presenting many of his own creative inventions.

Juliusz Osterwa created in 1919 a famous studio at the theatre "Reduta," a form of "Vieux Colombier" of Copeau in Paris, which, passing different phases, worked till the outbreak of the second World War. "Reduta" was an experiment in the theatre which united the young enthusiasts of the theatrical world. Osterwa created a special stage producing system. He strived towards finding the psychological values of the actor and to put them in the simple form. He produced whole series of remarkable shows, outstanding by expression and profound analysis of the human thought.

Aleksander Wengierko, actor and stage producer of the theatres "Polski" and "Maly" in Warsaw, has proved himself to be the master of the theatre of small shows striking by their finesse and penetration. His interpretation was always intelligent, interesting and theatrically well built. Modern repertoire and especially the works of poetic character were his chief points of interest.

Amongst the young stage producers we must name Ziembinski and Wacław Radulski, pupil of Schiller, actually with the 2nd Polish Corps in Italy.

Women stage producers form for themselves a group apart in the Polish theatre. Stanisława Wysocka, great tragedienne of our theatre upheld the tradition of the wonderful H. Modrzejewska, who became famous in Poland and in the United States, especially in the masterpieces of Shakespeare. Stanisława Perzanowska, assisted by the wonderful and highly-gifted actor, Stefan Jaracz, created shows which were successful events in the evolution of the Polish modern theatre. It must be underlined that the results obtained by S. Perzanowska in the stage-producing field were due chiefly to this actor.

In referring to the stage-setting, we must emphasize the importance of painters and decorators. All the stage producers with Schiller in the lead, owe much to this group. The Polish contemporary painters which were occupied with the theatre decoration were not mere "decorators", but rather "scenographic artists". The most famous Polish scenographers were: Wincenty Drabik, the Brothers Pronaszko, Karol Frycz and Władysław Daszewski.

Drabik preferred to take his inspiration from the works of Wyspiński which we have already mentioned. His realizations mark a great step in the evolution of the modern decoration on the Polish stage, rich with invention and original plastic ideas.

The plastic conception of the brothers Pronaszko is based on syncretism; with few plastic strokes, they understood to transpose the ideas of the show, constructing in a reasonable way the whole scene.

As the brothers Pronaszko, another collaborator or Schiller, Władysław Daszewski, takes an active role in the creation of the show.

Neorealism of Daszewski is to be understood in a unique individual manner. Daszewski uses realistic "allusions" in the place of strictly realistic facts. For example, that of coal. Daszewski would neither place on the stage real coal nor have it painted, but would have it produced by wood covered with painted cellophane. This would be a "realistic allusion", new and original in its conception, and therefore, sometimes arousing more interest than pure realism. This neorealism represents a new form of the solution of theatrical decoration.

Decorators who had an individuality could not avoid a collision with the stage producer. This friction inaugurated a rivalry between the scenographer and the stage producer, characteristic of the last years before the war, especially in Warsaw theatres.

The Polish theatre achieved a higher level of vitality and development in theme and form than had ever been attained before. It had several scenic aspects. Trying to avoid the banality of the routine, it willingly leaned to the influence of the European theatres. The different variety and style of the theatrical art on the Polish stage, with an unavoidable eclecticism was joined to the tendency of creating an individual style based on national traditions. Simultaneously this style was an expression of the tendencies of the community and of the spirit of the epoch. It was due to this class of theatrical art in Poland that inspired G. B. Shaw to stage his latest works in Warsaw before being shown in London theatres.

In Hollywood a picture was filmed during which a coloured Androclus had to put his head in to the mouth of a lion. Sam, playing the part of Androclus backed out in the last moment and all persuasions to make him change his mind were of no avail.

"Look here, Sam", said the worried manager "there is no harm in it, the lion was brought up on milk".

"Well, Ah was too, and now eats meat", was the answer.

EDUCATION AND CULTURE IN POLAND

Elementary education in restored Poland was compulsory and free. Only the very old people in a few remote places remained illiterate.

In the school year 1934/1935, out of a population of 34,000,000, 4,660,000 children were being educated in elementary schools, 166,000 in secondary schools, 80,000 young people in technical schools, 12,000 in teachers' colleges and 48,000 students were at Universities. Of the 166,000 children in secondary schools, 66,000 attended rather expensive private schools, but 100,000 were educated free, in schools run by the State. These national schools were the best in the country, equipped with excellent modern buildings, playgrounds, libraries, laboratories, etc. Universities and the high schools of engineering were also free.

Between the two wars, Polish Universities ruined by the Czarist régime were restored to activity. Two others, which had been allowed to remain Polish under the Austrian régime, were greatly developed. Two new ones were founded.

In 1937/1938 there were 192 high schools, devoted to the arts.

In 11 years, nine radio-stations were built and in the two years 1937/1938 the number of radio-subscribers doubled.

In 1936 there were 103 theatres in Poland (19 in Warsaw alone), of which 15 were Jewish, 2 German, 2 Russian and 14 Ukrainian. Theatres were subsidised by the State and City Councils. There were 8 opera companies, whilst philharmonic societies with concert halls were to be found in almost every big city.

In 1931 there were 1966 amateur theatrical companies known as Peoples' Theatres performing in what we called "People's Halls." A Union of Peasant Theatres was also active in the villages. The number of sport clubs—military and schools clubs excluded—increased from 5000 to 9000 in 5 years. The number of tourists' hotels for school children was doubled in 6 years.

Mrs. Maria Kuncewicz in "Democratic Poland Answers."

Johnny was taken to the Zoo by his uncle. Pointing at a deer the uncle said:

"Now Johnny, tell me what is the name of that animal?"

"I don't know" answered the boy.

"Yes you do. Just think of it. Now how is your mother calling Daddy at home?"

"Don't tell me it's a louse", said Johnny.

THE POLISH CONSTITUTION OF THE THIRD OF MAY

A LANDMARK IN POLISH HISTORY

POLAND—A PARLIAMENTARY COUNTRY.

It is impossible to understand the history of Poland, or even the essential character of the Polish nation unless it is realized that Poland is fundamentally a country in which the parliamentary system is a deep-rooted and age-old tradition. For this circumstance explains the fact that the most important moments of Polish history are concerned with the problem of parliamentarism, and that the Polish nation as such raised to the forefront of its tradition and history not battles or revolutions, but the date of a fundamental reform of parliament and the system: that of the Constitution of May 3rd, 1791. It is to this event that the following remarks are devoted.

For if we desire to sum up the very essence of a Pole and things Polish in a couple of sentences, then in relations with the outside world it consisted of a romantic struggle, against the heaviest of odds and conditions, for state independence, and internally it was dominated by a principle which at times suffered from exuberant overgrowth, namely, that a Pole regards as legal, justified and obligatory only that which has been resolved by a decision of the people or their delegates, i.e., by way of plebiscite or parliament.

PARLIAMENTARISM AND THE SLAVS.

We have to go a long way back into early history of Poland to understand how Poles came to be and remained devoted to the parliamentary system. For it is particularly characteristic of Poles, who are analogous in this case to the English, that among the Slavonic peoples they were the only nation which remained faithful to the parliamentary tradition throughout all their independent existence, and that irrespective of the processes to which other Slavonic nations were submitted only from the middle of the 19th and in certain cases only in the 20th century. It is obviously difficult to speak of any common Slavonic psychology,

despite the common root language, when for a thousand years of history each of the nations in the Slavonic lingual group was shaped in its own distinctive culture, system and religion.

So we must not overlook for one moment all the various processes, in operation for a thousand years and more, which had the effect of producing only one nation in these central eastern areas of Europe which was primarily a nation of a parliamentary system. We write "primarily" and not "exclusively" because for the sake of objectivity we must recognise that other nations in central Europe were also for centuries, though not uninterruptedly, educated in the parliamentary system. This applies, longest of all, to the Hungarians and Czechs.

THE UNBROKEN PARLIAMENTARY TRADITION.

So the Poles are a nation of Parliaments, in other words, a nation whose conception of legality requires the absolutely freely expressed agreement of all those interested, and this simply because in distinction from other nations they have been moulded in a thousand years of historical processes fundamentally different from those of all their neighbors. Nowhere else on the continent of Europe, among all the nations and states which have survived to the twentieth century, is the unbroken continuity of existence of parliament a feature of national life. Perhaps the most characteristic and striking similarity, or rather internal accordance between Polish and English, or British history, is the fact that Poland maintained her parliamentary system without a break down to the end of her independent existence as a State. And it must be added that the form of the Polish-Lithuanian Union has features similar to that of the system uniting Great Britain. Nor must we forget that, even during the years when Poles were divided and governed by inclusions in other states they immediately restored their parliamentary system whenever possible, first in the form of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw and the so-called Congress Kingdom of the 19th century, and later under the autonomy conceded by Austria.

THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL PRINCIPLES OF THE MAY 3RD CONSTITUTION.

The numerous provisions of the May 3rd Constitution include certain basic elements which have retained a lasting value for the Polish nation, as well as a number of valuable, just and sound decision which, however, arose out of the political requirements and the relationships existing in Poland at the end of the 18th century.

The greatness of the May 3rd, 1791, Constitution consisted in the fact that it eliminated the most fundamental weaknesses of the Polish

parliamentary and social system, and that is also the reason why this day marks both the crowning act of regeneration of the spirit of the Polish nation in the second half of the 18th century and also a testament of the progressive and evolutionary methods with which the Poles entered political life after the temporary downfall of their own state.

The preamble of the May 3rd Constitution clearly and unmistakably expresses the motivating force that gave birth to this remarkable and immortal document. Here is its preamble:

« Persuaded that our common fate depends entirely upon the establishing and rendering perfect a national constitution; convinced by a long train of experience of many defects in our government, and willing to profit by the present circumstances of Europe, and by the favorable moment which has restored us to ourselves; free from the disgraceful shackles of foreign influence; prizing more than life, and every personal consideration, the political existence, external independence, and internal liberty of the nation, whose care is entrusted to us; desirous, moreover, to deserve the blessing and gratitude, not only of our contemporaries, but also of future generations; for the sake of the public good, for securing our liberty, and maintaining our kingdom and our possessions; in order to exert our natural rights with zeal and firmness, we do solemnly establish the present constitution, which we declare wholly inviolable in every part, till such period as shall be prescribed by law, when the nation, if it should think fit, and deem necessary, may alter by its express will such articles therein as shall be found inadequate. And this present constitution shall be the standard of all laws and statutes for the future diets. »

SOVEREIGNTY OF THE PEOPLE.

In the very forefront of these lasting contributions we must place the principle of the sovereignty of the people in the state, which sovereignty was also made the primary postulate of the first Constitution of the restored Poland, passed on March 17th, 1921. In the 1791 Constitution this principle was formulated in the words:

« All power in civil society should be derived from the will of the people, its end and object being the preservation and integrity of the state, the civil liberty, and the good order of society, on an equal scale, and on a lasting foundation. Three distinct powers shall compose the government of the Polish nation, according to the present constitution; viz:

1. Legislative power in the States assembled.
2. Executive power in the King and council of inspection.
3. Judicial power in jurisdiction existing, or to be established. »

To any western European, who had been reared in French ideas, or even more in the age-old parliamentarism of Britain or in the principles

which have been natural to the United States from their very beginning, this principle is almost a truism, and something natural in itself. But in Eastern and Central Europe it cuts off the Poles and the Polish political tradition completely from both the Germans and the Russians, who have been reared throughout the centuries in the principle of state, and not national, sovereignty.

EXECUTIVE POWER.

The philosophy of government discernible throughout this Polish Constitution would lead one to believe that the American people and the Polish people had each drawn inspiration for their respective Constitutions from the same source. We find under article VIII relating to executive power these provisions:

« The most perfect government cannot exist or last without an effectual executive power. The happiness of the nation depends on just laws, but the good effects of laws flow only from their execution. Experience has taught us that the neglecting of this essential part of government has overwhelmed Poland with disasters. »

Under this same heading the constitution provides:

« This executive power cannot assume the right of making laws, or of their interpretation. It is expressly forbidden to contract public debts; to alter the repartition of the national income, as fixed by the diet; to declare war; to conclude definitely any treaty, or any diplomatic act; it is only allowed to carry on negotiations with foreign courts, and facilitate temporary occurrences, always with reference to the diet. »

HUMANITARIANISM AND TOLERANCE.

Throughout the May 3rd Constitution runs a philosophy of humanitarianism and tolerance, such as:

« We publish and proclaim a perfect and entire liberty to all people, either who may be newly coming to settle, or those who, having emigrated, would return to their native country; and we declare most solemnly, that any person coming into Poland, from whatever part of the world or returning from abroad, as soon as he sets his foot on the territory of the republic, becomes free and at liberty to exercise his industry, wherever and in whatever manner he pleases, to settle either in towns or villages, to form, and rent lands and houses, on tenures and contracts, for as long a term as may be agreed on; with liberty to remain, or to remove, after having fulfilled the obligations he may have voluntarily entered into. »

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM.

We find in this Polish Constitution, adopted almost contemporaneously with American Federal Constitution, rule by majority, secret ballot at public elections, and the language relating to religion that:

« The same holy religion commands us to love our neighbors, we therefore owe to all people of whatever persuasion, peace in matters of faith, and the protection of Government; consequently we assure, to all persuasions and religions, freedom and liberty, according to the laws of the country, and in all dominions of the Republic. »

Thus it was on May 3rd in 1791, barely two years after the adoption of its Constitution by the United States in 1789, that Poland without a bloody revolution or even without a disorder succeeded in reforming her public life and in eradicating all her internal causes of decline.

But this great rebirth and assertion of democracy came to the Poles twenty years too late and did not forestall the third partition of Poland in 1795, which left the Polish nation in the bondage of Russia, Germany and Austria until 1918.

Asked by a German officer during the Spanish Civil War which soldiers in his opinion were the best, the Spanish officer of General Franco's Army said:

"Why, of course, our soldiers".

"Yes, but next to them come the German soldiers" observed the German.

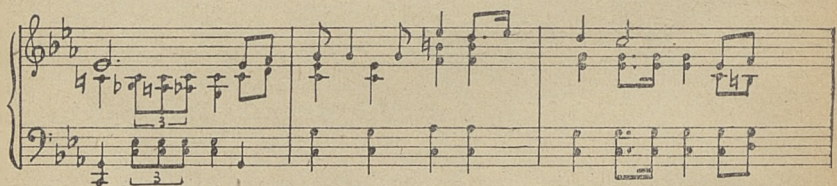
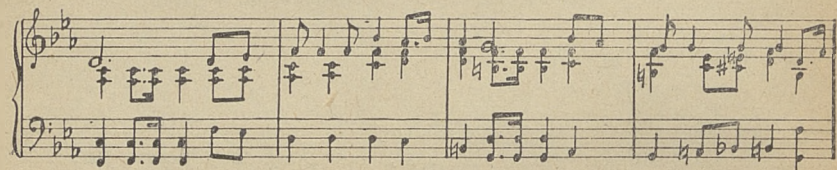
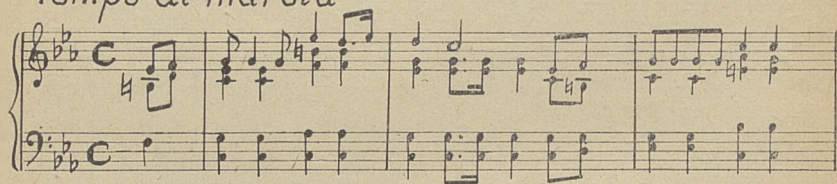
"No, those who oppose us come next" was the haughty reply.

RED POPPIES ON MONTE CASSINO

Words by **F. Konarski (Ref-Ren)**

Music by **A. Schütz**

Tempo di marcia



RED POPPIES ON MONTE CASSINO

The red poppies on Monte Cassino
Live for ever on Polish blood
But the will of the soldier who died there
Was much stronger than death in the mud..!
Years will pass and those blossoms grow older
Signs of bloodshed will always remain
For those poppies on Monte Cassino
Every spring will glow bright red again...!

The song of tribute to the fallen during the memorable battle of Monte Cassino.

Created and executed for the first time at the foot of the Monastery Hill, 2 days after the victory.

THE BATTLE OF SIX NATIONS

i. INTRODUCTION.

The series of struggles for *Monte Cassino* will pass into war history as a battle ranking with the Battles of the Somme, Verdun and El Alamein. In this battle, as in those that preceded it, military valour shone in a blaze of glory. American forces, British, New Zealand, French and Polish fought against a German opponent who threw into the battle for this mountain stronghold, the best of his troops, while commanders on both sides displayed iron determination and will for victory. The *Monte Cassino* feature was defended by the German I Para Division, picked members of Hitlerite youth, and by part of 5 Mountain Division, the tough Alpine troops of the Tyrol. The Allies attacked with each of several crack American Divisions in turn and every one of these fought with the doggedness typical of their nation. Alongside the Americans, was the French Algerian Division, a division which combined the tactical skill for which the French are renowned with the fighting spirit of the men from the Algerian hills. Later, Imperial forces were committed: the famous 4th Indian Division with its successes on the North-West Frontier, in Abyssinia and in Libya behind it and which was composed of those incomparable hand-to-hand fighters, the Gurkhas, and the elite of British battalions; the 2nd New Zealand Division, winners of great and lasting fame at El Alamein. The honour of completing the capture of *Monte Cassino*, however, was to fall to the men of 2nd Polish Corps which at that time consisted of two infantry divisions: 3 Carpathian Division, the veterans of Tobruk, and 5 Kresowa (Border) Division, the men who, after many months of hardships in Russian prisons and forced labour camps and long wandering in *Iraq* and the M. E., finally landed once more on European soil.

In these successive attacks, the willingness to make enormous sacrifices and the endurance of the Allied forces found their highest expression and the battle will occupy an outstanding place in the history of the Nations that took part.

The battle for *Monte Cassino* may be divided into three phases:

1. the attack by American and French forces (20 Jan.-14 Feb. 1944);

2. the attack by 2 New Zealand Div. and 4 Indian Div. (15 Feb. 24 Mar. 1944);

3. the attack by 2 Polish Corps (11 May - 18 May 1944).

II. THE FIRST BATTLE FOR MONTECASSINO.

After the capture of *Southern Italy* by the Allies at the end of 1943, their offensive was held up on the general defensive line *Ortona-Cassino-Minturno*, a line which had been selected and fortified earlier by the Germans. It would have been difficult to find natural positions more suitable for defence; here the Peninsula is at its narrowest and the network of roads leading to the front line, as well as of lateral roads, is extremely poor.

Here too the *Apennines* stretch across almost the whole breadth of the Peninsula, leaving a narrow coastal plain along the *Tyrrhenean Sea* with only one road, easily closed and, if necessary, easily destroyed. Further to the North rises the massif of the *Aurunci Mountains*, almost entirely devoid of roads; and by reasons of the difficulty of bringing up heavy equipment and of maintenance, not permitting the deployment of any considerable force. Had the Allies been successful in partly overcoming these difficulties, the enemy would have been able to counter-attack with reserves launched from areas suitable for the defence, areas provided with a rich net-work of roads allowing full use to be made of armour. On the other hand, the attacking troops could not bring forward any of their armour.

North-East of the *Aurunci*, the natural features of the *Liri* valley did, however, offer possibilities of giving full weight to the vast technical power of the Allies, the main factor in their preponderance in this theatre of war. The rivers *Gari* and *Rapido* could be forced, but any deeper penetration and especially the bringing up of heavy equipment along the valley would necessitate movement under extremely well observed enfilade fire from the *Monte Cassino* defences.

The mountainous heights of *Monte Cassino* form a natural stronghold and the means by which it could be captured had been the object of many studies by the Italian Staff College. This highground, even without artificial defences, was looked upon as an impregnable objective. The January offensive by the Allies, with *Rome* as its final objective, began with the attack by 10 American Corps with the object of capturing the high-ground of the *Aurunci Mountains* and of breaking through into the *Liri* valley from the South. On January 20th 1944, when 10 American Corps captured these hills and drew upon themselves the full weight of counter-attacks by four enemy divisions, 2 American Corps launched a frontal assault across the *Rapido* river. A few hours later, the French Corps attacked in the hills on the right with the purpose of outflanking

the defences along the *Rapido* from the North. These operations were synchronized with the landings at *Anzio*.

2 American Corps forced the *Rapido*, but found itself under such murderous fire that reinforcement of its troops on the far side of the swollen river, across the marshy ground in the valley, proved to be impossible and they had to withdraw. The Germans also had the advantage in the fire fight and extremely accurate observation from *Monte Cassino*, whereas the American troops had serious difficulty in bringing forward ammunition and other stores. It became obvious that the whole German defensive system depended upon the high ground dominating this confluence rivers.

2 American Corps then transferred its main effort to the right and started offensive operations with the object of capturing *Monte Castellone* and *Massa Albaneta*, thus out-flanking the *Monte Cassino* defences.

A second attempt at forcing the river *Rapido* North of *Cassino* encountered stiff enemy resistance, but after six days' heavy fighting, on January 30th, four American infantry regiments with a French division on their right pushed forward and captured the hills around the village of *Caira*.

After the capture of this village, of the hills surrounding it, and of the slopes of *Colle Majola*, 2 American Corps began during the night 29/30 January a series of pincer attacks with a view to capturing *Cassino* and the high ground dominating the town. While some units attacked the town from the *North* along the Western bank of the *Rapido*, others were given the task of capturing the hills in the area *Colle Majola* and *Monte Castellone*, and of assaulting *South-East* against *Monastery Hill*, a feature dominating the town.

In spite of repeated attempts, the troops attacking the town met with little success and in two weeks of fierce fighting, they managed to capture only a few houses in the outskirts.

The troops who were fighting in the hills achieved far greater success. By February 2nd, the greater part of *Monte Castellone* had been taken, together with the excellent observation provided by hill 706 and, by February 6th, these troops, under withering enemy fire, had fought their way to within 300 yards of the *Monastery*. This was the peak of the American success; another week of continuous attacks yielded no further results.

The last phase of the operations was fought in an area where difficulties of observation prevented our artillery from giving adequate support.

Maintenance of the troops was exceedingly difficult and called for a degree of sacrifice equal to fighting itself; from the very beginning it had to be carried out under continuous enemy observation and fire, over

the kilometre wide marshy ground of the flooded *Rapido*. The troops fought on rocky, bare mountainous slopes, where digging-in was impossible and no shelter was offered against heavy rain, sleet and snow. Then, after heavy casualties had been suffered and bad weather had added to the exhaustion resulting from several weeks hard fighting, command of the sector passed to the New Zealand Corps, consisting of 2 New Zealand Division and 4 Indian Division.

III. THE SECOND BATTLE FOR MONTE CASSINO.

The attack of New Zealand Corps was launched by 4 Indian Division along the axis of the hills 593, 569, 444 towards the *Monastery*. One Battalion of 7 Indian Brigade stormed hill 593 on the evening of February 15th, after the third bombing of *Monastery Hill*. The forward troops of the battalion came under heavy MG and mortar fire and were held up about 70 yards from the Start Line by an obstacle, not shown on the map, and very difficult to cross. (Afterwards it was found that this obstacle was a wall, several feet high which ran across the whole of hill 593 and into the cliff of hill 569.) After several unsuccessful attempts at crossing, or working round, this wall, the forward company had to withdraw.

After yet a further bombing of the *Monastery*, when an unprecedented weight of bombs was dropped on such a small objective, the battalion launched another attack against hill 593. This time the obstacle was by-passed and by 2200 hrs the forward company had consolidated on the hill; the enemy defensive positions proved to be surprisingly strong and they could be dealt with only by hand to hand and grenade fighting. The second company could not arrive as planned with the result that the forward company expended all its grenades and suffered heavy casualties. Several enemy positions were over-run, but the enemy was able to hold a few defensive positions at the very top of the hill. Our own casualties amounted to 12 Officers and 130 men and the attack had to be abandoned.

After two more unsuccessful attempts, plans for the attack on the high ground were changed. The sector of attack for 7 Indian Brigade was extended to include hill 450 (Colle d'*Onufrio*) and the Brigade was reinforced with another two battalions, to make five battalions in all under command. Two battalions attacked on the right, towards hill 593 and to the right of it, and two battalions on the left against the ridge of Colle d'*Onufrio* with the further task of capturing the *Monastery* itself. In this attack, during the night 17/18 February, fierce resistance was met. On the right flank, one battalion launched their attack at 2400 hrs and, pressing forward under very heavy fire, reported the capture of hill 593 by 0330 hrs. This battalion suffered heavy casualties in men and

Officers (only two Officers remained in all three companies); on the left flank from the very beginning, a *Gurkha* Battalion encountered difficulties in the form of a belt of thorny undergrowth fully a man's height, full of booby-traps and mines. A hail of fire and grenades onto the attacking troops came from the enemy in his well hidden positions. The fighting continued amongst the Germans bunkers to the roar of bursting shells and booby-traps; contact between fighting groups was lost in the thick undergrowth and due to the darkness. Only a small group was left from the two forward companies and withdrawal to the start line became imperative.

The battalions on hill 593, held by heavy enemy fire and by strong counter-attacks, could not advance. It was, therefore, decided to capture hill 444 with a fresh *Gurkha* Battalion by an attack along the slope bypassing hill 593. In the darkness, after fierce fighting where advances were made yard by yard, the forward companies reached hill 444 at dawn, a position which came to be called later 'the Valley of Death.' When dawn came, these companies found themselves under enemy fire from many directions and, one by one, men began to fall. The Brigade Commander decided that it was impossible to carry out an operation against the *Monastery* in daylight and he ordered the *Gurkhas* to withdraw. It was decided to reorganize, but to hold this hardly won slope of hill 593 as a base for further operations.

The attack by the 2 New Zealand Division was launched on the same night of 17/18 February with the object of establishing a bridgehead over the river *Gari* South of Highway 6 as the first phase. It was intended to continue this operation so as to breach enemy resistance on the Western banks of the *Gari* and to exploit along the valley of the *Liri*. 5 New Zealand Brigade was chosen to launch the attack to establish the bridgehead. Two forward companies forced the two arms of the river *Rapido* under heavy enemy fire and in spite of flooded ground and great numbers of anti-personnel mines, approached, just before night, the enemy wire obstacles near *Cassino* Railway Station. When daylight came, engineers had to stop mine-clearing, and the infantry battalion found itself in a very difficult situation. The ground on both sides of the railways track was flat and did not offer any natural concealment against extremely accurate enemy observation. The engineers, who, by night, had been able to build *Bailey* bridges over both arms of the *Rapido*, could not complete their work and no vehicles could be brought forward; thus infantry units were deprived of tank support and of anti tank gun protection. At 1600 hrs the Germans launched a counter attack along the railway line, supported by tanks from the edge of *Cassino* town. The battalion was compelled to withdraw to the Eastern side of the *Rapido*, leaving only a small outpost on the Western bank to protect the Railway bridge.

Owing to this lack of success, a pause had to be made to enable reorganisation to be carried out and the plan of attack was changed again. 6 New Zealand Brigade was to attack from area *Villa* and capture *Castle Hill* (point 193) and *Cassino* town, North of Highway 6. 5 Indian Brigade was to relieve the New Zealanders on *Castle Hill* as early as possible and then to attack along the Eastern slopes of *Monastery Hill* in order to capture the so called *Hangsman's Hill* (point 435) and eventually the *Monastery* itself. 7 Indian Brigade and 5 New Zealand Brigade were to support and to protect by fire the flanks of the attack. On the capture of the *Monastery*, it was intended to extend the attack to the South according to the previous plans.

On March 15th, the attack was preceded by the heaviest bombing of the town of *Cassino* ever yet used for tactical purposes. This bombing almost completely destroyed the enemy in the town but did not affect the defenders on the slopes of the hill, who were dug in amongst the rocks. *Castle Hill* and *Cassino* town were captured with the exception of a few strong-points in the South-West of the town. Any further advance was held up by piles of rubble and by craters filled with water from the *Rapido*. The bed of this river was blocked in one part by fallen trees and the river had overflowed its banks, thus adding to the difficulties of approach. Tanks could not be brought forward in support and the infantry began to lose its way among the labyrinth of rubble of wrecked buildings converted into a swamp. It began to rain and instead of moonlight, there was impenetrable darkness. All further advance had to be stopped and the enemy took advantage of the respite to bring up reinforcements.

The night attack by 5 Indian Brigade along the Eastern slopes of *Monastery Hill* was disorganized by heavy enemy fire. Companies stormed independently their objectives and achieved good individual results. Several strong-points were captured: hills 165, 236 and *Hangsman's Hill*; some companies had to withdraw. Too great emphasis cannot be placed upon the feat of two *Gurkha* companies in taking *Hangsman's Hill* in one bound. In addition to being a great military achievement, it provided a display of physical endurance, toughness and mountaineering skill, rarely if ever before equalled in battle. A very complicated situation then arose: Some strongpoints were held by the Germans and among them were others captured by the *Gurkhas*, while the difficulty of providing artillery support restricted further fighting to infantry skirmishes. The Germans, well placed on the ground had fewer maintenance difficulties than the Indians, and were slowly gaining the advantage; they were able to harass our porters carrying ammunition and later to recapture their lost positions.

Fighting continued until March 23rd, taking the form of attack and

counter-attack. In spite of the use of tanks on a small scale, the situation, after local and only temporary successes, did not change.

On March 23rd, HQ New Zealand Corps arrived at the conclusion that even by clearing the whole of *Cassino* town and the lower slopes of *Monastery Hill*, no operational advantage would be gained. Further attacks were thought purposeless, and HQ Eighth Army, which at that time took over that sector from the Fifth Army, began to plan for a Spring Offensive, one in which 2 Polish Corps was to be committed.

IV. THE THIRD BATTLE FOR MONTECASSINO.

The Commander of 2 Polish Corps learned from the Army Commander, Gen Sir Oliver Leese, for the first time of the anticipated use of his Corps in operations against the mountainous feature of *Monte Cassino* on March 24th, when the attack by the New Zealand Corps was still in progress, and its use was subject to this attack not achieving success. Gen. *Anders* decided to accept the task, having faith in the ability of his troops to win the day. At the same time Gen *Anders* realised that success would bring fame once more to Polish Arms and still further increase the spirit of the Polish nation, in its belief in final victory of Justice and Honour. On the other hand there was a risk that the whole Corps might be lost in one action, an operation in which the best divisions of the United Nations had not been able fully to succeed.

At the beginning, only a small group of Staff Officers started the preparatory work of collecting all necessary information and of conceiving the plan of the attack that was to come. The Corps Plan was based on Eighth Army's plan for the Spring Offensive and this anticipated an attack by 2 Polish Corps against the highground of *Monte Cassino* strictly related to an attack by 13 Corps along the *Liri* valley. Further to the South, the French Corps was to attack over the *Aurunci* Mountains using the natives of French North Africa for infiltration and the out-flanking of the German defences. 2 American Corps was to attack along the coastal road.

The following information was gained as a basis for operational planning. It was known that the heights of *Monte Cassino* was defended by the famous 1 German Para Division on the sector between the town of *Cassino* and hill 593. Further to the North, the sector up to *Monte Cairà* was held by 5 German Mountain Division. According to the information gained from formations which had previously attacked that objective, enemy defences were built in considerable depth and were reinforced by steel pill-boxes for MGs, mortars and light guns; they were also provided with concrete block-houses. All available buildings and ruins were used to the full as defended localities. The enemy had the support of artillery of a total strength of about 230 guns and of a regiment

of Nebelwerfers comprising about 40 six-barelled mortars with numerous mortars of smaller calibre. The greatest difficulties were encountered in ascertaining the lay-out of the enemy defensive system. Formations which have attacked formerly could give no exact details apart from the fact that the whole area of the battle-field was covered with a complicated and interlocked net of enemy MG, mortar and gun fire.

The object of 2 Polish Corps was:

" To isolate the area *Monastery Hill Monte Cassino* from the North and the North-West and to dominate Highway 6 until junction is effected with 13 Corps. .

To attack and capture the *Monastery Hill*. "

The decision of the Corps Commander was as follows: To attack with his whole force along the axis *Colle Majola-Massa Albaneta*, to breach the enemy defences in the area hill 593-*Colle S. Angelo* and thus to achieve domination over Highway 6 and to isolate the *Monastery*; to continue the attack and to capture the *Monastery*.

The tasks were allotted to the divisions in the following manner:

5 Kresowa Division was to attack and to capture the highground *Phantom Ridge-Colle S. Angelo* and hill 575 and then to effect junction with units of 13 Corps.

3 Carpathian Division was to attack and capture hill 593. On the capture of divisional objectives, 3 Carpathian Division was to continue their effort and attack over hill 444, to capture the *Monastery*.

These operations were to be covered on the flanks by dismounted recon regiments holding the ridge *Monte Castellone* on the right and the slopes of *Monte d'Onufrio* on the left.

Each division was allotted a squadron of tanks which was to be used as the situation demanded. The whole attack was to be supported by the fire of over 300 guns.

Preparations on an unprecedented scale were carried out. Engineers widened and extended the so called Polish Sapper's Road, to double its previous length so that both infantry division could be maintained and tanks could be brought forward. 'Inferno Track,' a precipitous road through the mountainous massif East of the *Rapido* valley, was considerably improved.

Signal units laid a series of dug-in lines across the valley of the *Rapido* to secure them against enemy artillery fire. This work was carried out by night and many mine-fields had to be cleared.

The following quantities of war material were brought up on lorries or mules, carried, if necessary, by porters and dumped:

500,000 rounds of artillery ammunition, 40,000 rounds of mortar ammunition, 359,000 gallons of petrol and one day's rations for, 339,000 men.

over and above the huge quantity of S.A. ammunition, grenades, etc.

The following camouflage material was used:

4.000 camouflage nets, 7.000 camouflaged snipers suits, 5.800 gallons of paint, 50 coils of steel wool, 1.500 yards of *Hessian*.

Our own artillery positions had to be established sufficiently far forward to enable support being given during the attack. Unfortunately this necessitated the sitting of guns in the flat *Rapido* valley under enemy observation from Monte *Cifalco*, Monte *Caira* and from *Monastery Hill* and under enemy artillery fire directed from the area *Belmonte-Atina* (North of Monte *Cifalco*). Our Artillery, therefore, had to be extremely well camouflaged and had to remain silent until the actual attack started; from 'H' hour, the gun positions were continuously screened by smoke for the whole period of attack. These measures were successful and right up to the capture of *Monastery Hill*, enemy counter-battery fire did not seriously hamper the activity of our own artillery. The smoke screen covered a belt of ground 7 kilometres wide. 18.000 Smoke Generators were used, a total weight of about 400 tons.

All these stores had to be brought forward by lorry to the Eastern side of the *Rapido* valley, where they were re-loaded into Jeeps, or onto mules, and by night brought to the foot of the mountain slopes. Then the arduous and hazardous work of the porters began.

On 8th April 1944, the Corps Commander finally decided on his plan. From April 15th, Polish troops started to take over the sector of the future attack in relief of British units. From that time, feverish dumping of stores for the oncoming battle took place. All these preparations were finished on May 8th. It was decided that 'H' hour would be 2300 hrs May 11th 1944. From the moment of taking over the sector until 'D' day, the men had to live in their defensive positions under enemy observation from many directions. Any movement by day brought down enemy infantry and artillery fire. Moves could be carried out only by night. During daylight, the men had to stay in cramped uncomfortable positions in shallow hollows scraped in the rocky ground, without any adequate cover against enemy fire.

V. THE FIRST ATTACK BY 2 POLISH CORPS.

Punctually at 2300 hrs, the whole of Eighth and Fifth Army artillery sprang to life, from *Acquafondata* stretching as far as the *Tyrrhenean* coast. Throughout the first forty minutes, over 1000 guns of Eighth Army concentrated their fire on known enemy artillery and mortar positions in the area *Atina-Belmonte*, onto *Villa S. Lucia* and the *Liri* valleys, "Mortar" Wadi, *Passo Corneo* and the area of *Terelle*. This counter-battery fire was particularly important to the operation of 2 Polish Corps, as owing to the right angle bend formed by the front line in the area of *Monte Caira*, enemy artillery from *Belmonte-Atina* was able to fire into the rear

of attacking Polish troops. At the end of this 40 minutes, that is after 2340 hrs, the bulk of our artillery was directed against enemy infantry positions on the objectives of both Corps attacks, while at the same time, harassing of enemy artillery and mortars was continued. Artillery preparation on 2 Polish Corps sector continued until 0100 hrs on May 12th and then the infantry of both divisions began to cross their Start Lines. It must be added that 2 Polish Corps consisted of two divisions only, each two brigades strong, making a total of twelve battalions.

At 0100 hrs on May 12th, the two assaulting battalions of 5 *Wilno* Brigade, preceded by sapper patrols for clearing mines and marking the route, moved from their Forming Up areas towards *Phantom Ridge*, an intermediate brigade objective. 18 Battalion was in the second flight, behind 15 Battalion on the left, and was to leave its Forming Up area later and to pass through the leading battalions to capture hill 575.

Progress made by these leading battalions however, was unexpectedly slow. They were to start their assault against *Phantom Ridge* at 0145 hrs. but the forward elements did not reach the ridge until 0230 hrs. This delay was caused by heavy enemy artillery and mortar fire which began immediately the infantry left their Forming Up areas and the forward battalions suffered approximately 20 % casualties in their advance towards *Phantom Ridge*. In addition, this fire partly disorganized the assaulting troops and severed communications with the Brigade Commander. Two companies of 13 Battalion, moving on the extreme Northern axis, reached the top of *Phantom Ridge* where they met concentrated enemy artillery and mortar fire with both frontal and enfilade fire from enemy automatic weapons. Under this heavy fire, companies were quickly whittled away. The two rear companies of this battalion also reached the top of *Phantom Ridge*, but, after clearing pill-boxes on its Northern sector, were pinned down by murderous fire which made further movement impossible.

In the South, 15 Battalion swarmed to the top of *Phantom Ridge* and engaged the pill-boxes there, a difficult task owing to the thick undergrowth, the rocky ground and the darkness. Two companies of this battalion managed to force a way between enemy pill-boxes to reach hill 517 and then they came under enemy fire. The Commander of this half-battalion, finding himself out of touch with flank units and completely isolated, withdrew to *Phantom Ridge*, where he started mopping up enemy position that had been overrun.

At 0300 hrs. 18 Battalion found itself at its Forming Up Place alongside 14 Battalion defences, with all communications forward and with the Brigade Commander, broken. The Battalion Commander, seeing elements of 15 Battalion passing over *Phantom Ridge*, assumed that this ridge was completely in our hands and ordered his battalion to advance. By 0630

hrs, 18 Battalion had reached *Phantom Ridge* and its troops joined with the men of 15 Battalion in mopping up enemy pill-boxes. By this time, the area was congested with our troops and casualties began to mount up under the increasing weight of enemy fire. At dawn, an enemy counter-attack was hurled back.

The general situation may be described in the following way: forward elements were engaged in a battle among enemy pill-boxes when the second waves, with no space to move forward, were caught and pinned down on the Eastern slopes of *Phantom Ridge* by enemy artillery and mortar fire. These slopes were the target of enemy DF, as was proved subsequently from captured maps and our troops found themselves in the middle of the defensive rectangle of fire, on rocky ground which offered no suitable shelter. This situation continued until 1300 hrs, when only remnants of units were left, remnants too small to achieve further success. As a result, the Divisional Commander ordered the withdrawal of the surviving troops. Some companies, however, remained on *Phantom Ridge* among the enemy pill-boxes and re-joined their units on May 13th.

The infantry of 1 Carpathian Brigade left their Forming Up area at the same time as 5 *Kresowa* Division, at 0100 hrs. 2 Battalion had to launch an attack from the area of hill 596 (known as "*Snake's Head*"), along the ridge toward hill 593 with the object of capturing hills 593 and 569.

1 Battalion, West of 2 Battalion, attacked with its four companies one behind the other, with the object first of capturing the *Gorge* and then *Massa Albaneta*. A troop of tanks, which had to use the track running from *Colle Majola* to *Massa Albaneta*, supported 1 Battalion.

2 Battalion stormed hill 593 at 0130 hrs and by 0245 hrs had liquidated most of the enemy pill-boxes on the hill; further, some infantry elements overran the Northern part of hill 569.

1 Battalion was held up before the *Gorge* by heavy fire from the *Gorge* itself, from the Western slopes of hill 593 and from the high ground *S. Angelo* with the result that it suffered heavy casualties. It was not until dawn had come and there had been more artillery "softening" on *Massa Albaneta* and the *Gorge*, that 1 Battalion, supported by tanks, could attack the *Gorge* and succeed in capturing the Northern part of it. A part of this Battalion went even beyond the *Gorge* but, lacking tank support, was forced to withdraw under murderous fire from *Massa Albaneta* and hill 575. Some tanks had been halted by the rocky ground; others had struck mines. The whole *Gorge* was heavily mined and Sappers engaged in clearing a path for the tanks suffered such casualties that they were unable to continue their work. (From the sapper detachment engaged in this work, 18 out of 20 were either killed or wounded.)

At the same time the enemy artillery and Nebelwerfers held the ap-

proaches to hill 593 and to the *Gorge* under such heavy and continuous fire, that any communication forwards, and the bringing up ammunition was out of the question. Enemy reserves, supported by overhead MG and mortar fire from the *Monastery* and by enfilade fire from Colle d'*Onufrio*, started a series of counter-attacks. Seven fierce counter-attacks against 2 Battalion were launched by the enemy before 1130 hrs. All these counter-attacks were beaten off by artillery fire and by the infantry, but casualties were so high that, on the Southern slopes of hill 593, only one officer and seven men remained. Companies on the Northern slopes of hill 593 also suffered casualties from artillery and mortar fire, particularly artillery fire from area *Atina-Belmonte* in their rear and MG fire from *S. Angelo* and from hill 575. A message was received at 1200 hrs that the part of hill 569 that had been captured, was lost to the enemy. Hill 593 was held by our infantry until 1900 hrs 12th May and then they received orders to withdraw, the continued holding of this hill being considered useless. 1 Battalion was also withdrawn from in front of the *Gorge*, as they were being cut down by exceptionally heavy enemy artillery, artillery which was also shelling our tanks in that area.

The attack of 13 Corps began according to plan with the forward elements forcing the river and establishing small bridgehead on the Western bank of the *Gari*, beginning at its confluence with the *Rapido* and extending to the village of *San Angelo*. As most of the enemy fire was concentrated on defence of the high ground of *Mont Cassino*, the troops met only slight artillery and mortar fire. By the evening of 12th May, units had pushed forward at several points to a maximum distance of one kilometre from the river. Progress was slow owing to the difficulty of getting heavy equipment across.

At 1600 hrs, the Commander of Eighth Army arrived at Corps HQ and both Commanders reviewed the position. It was agreed that the attacks by 2 Polish Corps and 13 Corps were too widely separated, that the Germans might be prepared to lose some ground in the *Liri* valley and that by shifting their fire and their reserves on to 2 Polish Corps sector they might attempt to destroy it making full use of their advantage of ground. The Army Commander decided that the 2 Polish Corps attack would be repeated after 13 Corps had advanced further in the *Liri* valley and when shortened distances prevented the enemy using his fire manoeuvrability.

The time of this second attack was to be given by the Army Commander.

The attack by 2 Polish Corps on 12 May, beyond reducing the strength of the enemy, did not result in the expected tactical success. On the other hand it can be said that the operational success gained was considerable: the enemy had committed the major part of his artillery against the high

ground of *Monte Cassino* and could, therefore, make use of only a small proportion of his remaining artillery resources against the 13 Corps sector. He thus failed to prevent 13 Corps from establishing their bridgeheads.

The results of our counter-battery fire became limited as the hours went by and enemy artillery began to regain its ascendancy more and more during the morning of May 12th its efficiency unimpaired. Enemy artillery from the area *Atina-Belmonte*, firing into the rear of our troops, inflicted most casualties. Some enemy artillery from the *Liri* valley also took part.

Enemy losses included one reserve battalion of 1 Para Regiment almost completely destroyed by our arty concentration; according to Prisoners of War only a few scores of men were left. Companies which were defending our objective had less than twenty men remaining after the attack, although they had begun at full strength.

As a result of this fighting, it was possible to form a clear idea of the enemy defensive lay-out and of the reasons for its strength. It was the more interesting since both the Germans and the Allies' attacking formations looked upon the natural *Monte Cassino* fortress as an almost impregnable objective.

Enemy defensive positions covered hills and ridges forming, as it were, two rings. One ring comprised hill 593, *Phantom Ridge*, Colle S. Angelo, Hill 575, hill 505 and *Massa Albaneta*. The other covered *Monastery Hill*-ridge from hill 444 to hill 476, hill 569 and Colle d'Onufrio. In the middle of these rings there were deep valleys. All strong-points were sited around these rings and the valleys were defended by fire from all directions. Such a defensive system may be compared to a Roman amphitheatre, where every man in the audience sees the other and vice versa. Any weapon on the circumference of a ring could take part in the battle for any other sector on the circumference. The capture of any part of the circumference did not provide sufficient width to hold the ground taken. It was only by capturing at least half of a ring by simultaneous assault that success might be secured. In our case, this minimum objective was a sector covering hill 593, *Phantom Ridge* and Colle S. Angelo. The lack of suitable forming-up places did not permit of attack on all these objectives simultaneously. These facts confirmed, however, the wisdom of the original plan for the attack and this plan was not changed when the second attack on May 17th was launched. In the mean-time, units were re-organized, carried out recesses and continued to harass the enemy.

VI. THE SECOND ATTACK BY 2 POLISH CORPS

At 0600 hrs on May 17th, artillery preparation began and it lasted until 0700 hrs when the infantry of 5 Kresowa Division launched their

attack. Earlier, during the night of 16/17 May, 16 Battalion had carried out a surprise sortie against and had consolidated on Northern part of *Phantom Ridge*. 17 Battalion, after leaving their Forming Up Places, advanced quickly past hill 706, reached *Phantom Ridge* and, passing through 1 Battalion, stormed Colle S. *Angelo* at 0710 hrs, following our own artillery so closely that it came partly under its fire. It was largely due to the speed of this advance that the major part of this battalion escaped enemy defensive fire; this came too late and only engaged the tail-end of the Battalion consisting mainly of ammunition porters, stretcher-bearers, wireless operators, etc. This battalion was successful in mopping up the North-East slopes of Colle S. *Angelo* but on its Western slopes, a series of pill-boxes continued tenaciously to be defended by the Germans.

The fighting by 17 Battalion on Colle S. *Angelo* was being waged with the utmost ferocity when the Germans counter-attacked. There were heavy casualties and enemy fire from the Southern slopes of *Passo Corno* with mortar fire from the valley of *Villa S. Lucia* was particularly troublesome. Troops of 17 Battalion, having expended all their ammunition, were unable either to move forward or to drive off enemy counter-attacks, which reached their climax at 1400 hrs, effectively. All this time, battalion in the second wave and assembly areas were constantly under enemy artillery and mortar fire which prevented communication with the rear. Between 1500 hrs and 1600 hrs a heavy concentration was put down by our own artillery and mortars, after which the infantry, 16 Battalion and the Polish Commando Company, carried out a counter-attack against S. *Angelo* and succeeded in mopping up its Southern slope and up to the summit. The attempt to extend the attack onto the Northern slopes of Colle S. *Angelo* did not succeed owing to difficulties in providing artillery support. Thus the situation on S. *Angelo* did not undergo any material change until the morning of May 18th.

At 0720 hrs on May 17th, as a result of the great effort of supporting engineers, a number of tanks succeeded in reaching the Southern slopes of *Phantom Ridge* where they destroyed several German bunkers and covered the attack against Colle S. *Angelo*.

6 Battalion of 3 Carpathian Division began to advance towards the *Gorge* at the same time as 17 Battalion, with two of their companies directed along the Western slopes of hill 593 against *Massa Albaneta*. During the day, infantry and tanks, assisted by sappers clearing the tracks of mines, advanced yard by yard destroying the enemy defending the *Gorge*. Tanks passed through the *Gorge* onto the open ground of *Massa Albaneta* and brought *Massa Albaneta* and the Western slopes of hill 593 under their own fire. The approach to *Massa Albaneta* itself was very difficult on account of the thickly sown mines in the open

ground before the building. By the evening of May 17th, the infantry of 6 Battalion had approached to within 150 yard of the ruins of *Massa Albaneta*. Capture of this strong-hold necessitated more mine lifting and this could not be done before the dusk had fallen.

4 Battalion carried out its first assault against hill 593 at 0923 hrs on May 17th. The enemy position was heavily defended by Spandau fire and the enemy succeeded in driving back the forward attacking company. The company Commander repeated the assault for the second and the third time suffering appalling casualties in so doing. His company was compelled to halt and was then pinned down by heavy fire. The Battalion Commander threw further companies into the assault, but all with the same result, and in attack and counter-attack, hill 593 changed hands again and again. At 1430 hrs, and after further preparations, yet another assault supported by the whole of the artillery was launched. The Battalion Commander led his men personally: he was killed by a burst of Spandau fire and the first wave of attacking troops was cut down by the enemy fire. This assault too, fell short of success and once again the attack broke down on the Southern slopes of hill 593, 50 yards from the heavily defended enemy MG positions. At 1535 hrs 4 Battalion passed over to the defence with the task of holding the captured positions.

At dawn, May 18th, 4 Battalion repeated an assault against the enemy positions on the Western slopes of hill 593 and this time succeeded in taking the hill completely. The fighting lasted until 0700 hrs, after which troops began to storm hill 569 and this objective they captured at 1000 hrs. During the night the enemy withdrew his troops defending deeper positions, but still tried to hold the forward defensive positions. Our troops were therefore able to annihilate the enemy in their pill-boxes on the heights, and then moved towards the *Monastery*, which was reached at 1015 hrs. The German Commander of this defensive sector surrendered with about 30 men, while about a hundred Germans made their way down the slopes of *Monastery Hill*, and surrendered to the British. The mopping up by 3 Carpathian Division of scattered pill-boxes lasted until 1400 hrs.

At 1600 hrs one Polish platoon made contact with units of 78 British Division on Highway 6.

Commander 5 Kresowa Division continued operations on May 18th, but, having no fresh troops, he committed two improvised half-battalions formed from men of the Anti Tank Regiment, Divisional Defence Company, spare drivers, etc. In the morning Colle S. *Angelo* was completely mopped up and the troops approached to the foot of hill 575. The fighting for this hill was prolonged until the evening owing to the impassable nature of the ground; steep walls and numerous crevices and fissures in

the rocks were used by the German Para Troops as dug-outs. German resistance on this hill was desperate. As was later discovered, the reason for this fierce German resistance was the rumour widely spread amongst them that Poles do not take prisoners. They, therefore, fought to the very end and perished rather than surrender. Hill 575 was captured eventually on night 18/19 May.

The Poles showed a similar stubbornness and this can be seen from the heavy casualties suffered by the Corps. Eg., out of the commanders of three attacking brigades, one was killed and one wounded; from amongst the commanders of nine attacking battalions two were killed and two wounded; casualties amongst company and platoon commanders were, in proportion, much heavier. In one of the attacking battalions all the company commanders became casualties. The total losses of 2 Polish Corps in the battle against the highground *Monte Cassino*, *Piedimonte* and *Monte Caira* were as follows:

| | Offrs | ORs |
|-------------------------|-------|------|
| Killed | 72 | 788 |
| Wounded | 204 | 2618 |
| Missing | 5 | 97 |
| <hr/> | | |
| <i>Total casualties</i> | 281 | 3503 |

The German losses were also heavy. After the massif had been captured it was found that the number of enemy killed was about 900 apart from those already buried by the enemy; the number of wounded during the first attack is not known, but it was certainly proportionally high.

The fact that all this took place in an area measuring about one square mile, also shows how fierce the battle raged.

VII. CONCLUSIONS.

The monastery of Benedictine Monks at *Monte Cassino* was converted into a heap of rubble, a pile of debris from fallen walls and columns, damaged sculptures and the remains of half-burnt books from the Library. This Monastery had been one of the sources of inspiration for the growing Christian civilization in the early middle ages. From this Monastery, numberless Friars left for England, France, Poland and Germany, to reinforce the Christian Faith, to teach the art of reading and writing, to soften customs and to improve the ways of agriculture.

It is not without some purpose that the Nations sent their best sons to shed their blood on the slopes of Monastery Hill and on the heights surrounding it, in a struggle for these same Christian ideas of freedom

and the rights of man against those who tried to establish once again, the ancient rights of the sword and mere power of arms.

Now the war is over, Americans, English, French and New Zealanders will return to their countries and to their homes, to their relatives and to their friends. They will cherish the same rights and enjoy the same freedom as before.

The men of 2 Polish Corps, the men of the Polish Army, who first started the struggle for the defence of these ideals in September 1st, 1939, and fought for wellnigh six years side by side with British and Americans—these soldiers cannot, as yet, return to find their country free. But they have unbounded faith that the blood shed at *Monte Cassino* and on so many battlefields will not have been in vain and that their turn will come.

LIFE AND DEATH IN THE WARSAW GHETTO

by I. LUBER

(Excerpts)

The Warsaw Ghetto. The biggest concentration camp in Europe, where a million people died a slow death. Since the creation of the Ghetto behind its walls terrific murders took place. And when, since July 1942 the mass transports to the death factories at Tremblinka took place, the inhabitants of the Ghetto took up the unequal fight. It was a terrific and hopeless struggle. And the Jewish leaders met with a total comprehension on behalf of the Polish Underground leaders. From these circles came out the first appeal to the world to help the Jews. At that time there were no secret stores and already guns and ammunition were flowing to the Ghetto. Several members of the Polish Underground Organization died on the Ghetto barricades. And it was with reason that the bloody butcher Brigadenfuehrer Stropp wrote in his diary, that it was owing to the "Polish bandits" that the Ghetto could keep fighting so long. It was a common struggle of the citizens of one country against their common foe.

The last fight...

... The Jewish resistance movement was growing in strength and number. Not only the armed units of ZOB (Jewish Fighting Organization) but also the whole population of the Ghetto decided to sell their life at a dear price. And so they were passing the time waiting for action and preparing arms.

It was commonly known that there was no possibility of survival when the news arrived of the Allied victories at Stalingrad, in Libia, heavy bombardment of the German towns and the hope of liberation for Europe.

It is easy to understand what was happening in the souls and minds of the inhabitants of the Ghetto while they were awaiting their last and hopeless fight.

The SS and Polizeifuehrer was replaced by Brigadenfuehrer Stropp. It was said that he brought new instructions from Berlin. On an April

Monday on the eve of the Jewish Easter strong units of the SS and the German police encircled the Ghetto. The order for action came so suddenly that on Saturday Jewish painters were still called on Monday in order to paint the flats of higher Nazi officials at the Chocimska str. This action came as a surprise even to the Gestapo. The final liquidation of the Ghetto had started. The Jews answered with fire. In the first few days none of the Germans could manage to enter those areas where the Jewish fighting organization was. They defended themselves in the workshops from which the Germans managed only to remove some of the employees to Poniatów. At the beginning of the action German detachments fighting against the Jews were composed of two battalions Waffen SS, one battalion Schupo, two Ukrainian companies, one Gestapo unit, ten light machine guns, six tanks and four armoured cars. This force was opposed by the Jews with about 60 rifles and several hundreds pistols and hand grenades (German forces strength are given by the statement of SS und Polizeifuehrer fuer den Distrikt Warschau, Bandenbekämpfung Warschau, the 30th April).

All the time ambulances rushed to carry wounded Germans away; Stuckas and flame-throwers went into action and incendiary bombs were thrown. Houses were burning and whole blocks too, with people in them. But nobody left the Ghetto which continued the battle. The white blue banner was put out at the Grzybowski square, in order to emphasize that the Jewish fight in the Ghetto was a Jewish investment in the universal Polish defence movement, and a white-red banner was also hoisted.

Traffic close to the walls was stopped. The ranks of the Jewish fighting organization were getting smaller and German losses were also great. The Jewish fighters destroyed 3 German tanks and a few armoured cars by hand grenades. One of the tanks hit a mine and blew up. More than hundred SS men were taken prisoner and were shot a few days later as a reprisal for several Jewish rebels killed in the most cruel way. During the fighting, assaults were made to retake the Pawiak prison, but during that action the attackers were repulsed by machine guns placed on the top of the prison and many Jews were killed.

Also Jewish women took part in the tough fight and in the first day Pola Ester, one of the leaders, was killed.

During the first day of the action much ammunition was supplied to the Ghetto through an underground passage which linked the Jewish Muranowski Square with the Arian part of the same square. No. 4. After 10. days the passage was discovered. The German MPs shot all the men who were found in that very house where the passage was. Thirtysix people were shot including John of the Polish Underground Movement, who was ordered by the organization to work there as a porter and lead the supply of ammunition during the battle to the Ghetto.

As a punishment the whole population from the Przebieg str. to the Muranowski square and the Bonifraterska str. were forced to move. More and more tanks were thrown into the action by the Germans. All the time Stuckas were throwing bombs into the burning ruins. The rebels did not surrender. Moreover during the night they used to cross the walls killing Germans and Ukrainian posts. After such three expeditions the posts were extended from 2 to 12 men.

The connection between the various defence points was impossible to keep as the passages were all the time under machine and hand grenades fire. There was no contact with the headquarters. All groups without orders defended themselves to the last round.

Amnesty was announced on the area of the shops. And it was said that those leaving the bunkers and shelters are not going to be punished, but they would be sent to the labor-camps. No one left his post. New battalions of Waffen SS came from Zoliborz. A special envoy of the SS Hauptamt in Berlin had arrived to lead the action together with Stropp. The whole Ghetto was almost covered with shells. The houses close to the Ghetto had no windows or frames. Tramway wires and telephone cables were hanging from the poles. The whole district was burning but did not surrender. Mothers with their children sprang into the fire. The fighters after having shot the last round cut their veins.

In this strange unequal battle the Jewish fighters held out for 3 weeks. Almost all of them fell. The leaders: Klepfisz (awarded posthumously the Cross of "Virtuti Militari"), Anielewicz, Kaplan, Jelen, Ehrlich and Pola Ester fell. Only a very few of them managed to escape through underground passages (Zuckermann, Turkow, Cywia, and Wanda Elster).

The Germans dropped gas-bombs into the canals so that thousands of people lost their life in them. On the last day of the action those detained at the Umschlagplatz were brought to the Befehlstelle; Lichtenbaum; Stolcman; Wielikowski and Szereszewski,—were all shot on Stropp's order. Their bodies were thrown on a rubbish heap. The same fate faced the leaders of the orderly police.

After 3 weeks fighting the whole Ghetto was a mass of rubble, in which thousands of Jewish fighters died like heroes.

On the German side according to the monthly census of the Elisabeth Hospital in Mokotów 687 Germans were killed and 964 wounded. On Stropp's order the Jewish Synagogue at the Tlomackie str. was blown up and the cemetery at the Okopowa str. was levelled. The last trace of the Jewish existence in Warsaw had gone.

A month later Brigadenfuehrer Stropp was decorated with the Knight Cross and the biggest murderers of the Gestapo with Iron Crosses, for "exemplary liquidation of the Warsaw Ghetto".

The remnants of the Ghetto who were saved of the April pogroms and managed to escape once again let themselves into battle.

When on the 1 st of August the Warsaw National Uprising started, all those Jews still alive joined the battle taking their positions on the barricades. In the old town those who were relieved from the concentration camp at the Gesia str. were fighting in a tough manner. On many points where the battle was raging Jewish fighters gave an example of heroism. Many of them fell.

This was the last ransom of their blood.

WORDS AND DEEDS

The V-E Day found Soviet Russia occupying the territories inhabited by 115 million people who before the outbreak of the World War II formed twelve independent states.

The largest among them is Poland, a country of 35 million people, whose thousand-year-old history is imbued with western civilization. It is noteworthy that Poland was the first in the world and the only one of the East-European states to oppose Hitler's aggression arms in hand. It was in Poland then that the avalanche started, but which in the end crushed Hitler himself.

On the following pages we shall review the relations between Russia—the largest among the United Nations, and Poland—the oldest and most faithful among them.

As the best and fairest way to acquaint the reader with Polish-Russian relations—frequently presented in a rather inaccurate and confusing way—we quote the most important Soviet declarations and compare them with Soviet policy toward the smaller Allied neighbor.

WORDS.

On July 25, 1932, the Soviet Government signed a non-aggression pact with the Polish Republic.

Article 3 of this pact provided:

"Each of the Contracting Parties undertakes not to be a party to any agreement openly hostile to the other Party from the point of view of aggression."

DEEDS.

On August 23, 1939 the astounded world learned that while in one of the Kremlin's reception rooms Soviet diplomats discussed military alliance with England and France, in the other Commissar Molotov signed an agreement with Germany.

This agreement, known as the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact, launched the World War II. Aware of the unpreparedness of the Western Democracies, the Germans having assured themselves of neutrality of Soviet Russia threw all their military power against Poland.

WORDS.

Another article of the same Polish-Soviet pact of July 25, 1932, contains the following provision:

"The two Contracting Parties, recording the fact that they have renounced war as an instrument of national policy in their mutual relations, reciprocally undertake to refrain from taking any aggressive action against or invading the territory of the other Party, either alone or in conjunction with other Powers."

DEEDS.

On September 1, 1939, Germany attacked Poland.

On the seventeenth day of the Polish-German war, the Red Army entered Poland, occupied half of her territory and imprisoned 181,000 soldiers and officers.

Soviet invasion destroyed all Polish plans of a defensive stand against the "Wehrmacht" east of the Bug River and made impossible prolonged Polish resistance against the Nazi invader.

WORDS.

On August 27, 1939, three days before the German invasion of Poland, Soviet Marshal K. Voroshilov declared that "help in the form of raw materials and war materials is a commercial question, and no Pact of Mutual Assistance whatever, far less a Military Convention, is needed in order to supply Poland with these materials" (*Izvestia*, Moscow).

Even on September 2, 1939, on the second day of the Polish-German war, the Soviet Ambassador in Warsaw called on the Polish Foreign Minister and asked why the Poles were not negotiating with the Soviets regarding supplies as the Voroshilov interview "had opened up the possibility of getting them:" (*Official Documents concerning Polish-Soviet Relations*, 1933-1939, No. 171).

DEEDS.

Despite Polish requests, the Soviets—before they had invaded Poland—did not send even one ton of materials to help the Polish Army's fight against the German panzer-divisions. Lying in ambush they watched indifferently the desperate struggle of the Poles with the crushing might of the Reich's military power.

WORDS.

Article 2 of Polish-Soviet non-aggression pact of July 25, 1932, provided:

"Should one of the Contracting Parties be attacked by a third State or by a group of other States, the other Contracting Party undertakes not

to give aid or assistance, either directly or indirectly, to the aggressor State during the whole period of the conflict."

DEEDS.

In the period of Soviets-German friendship (1939-1941) the Soviets exported to Reich a steady stream of supplies, especially grain, petroleum and other critical raw materials. Part of these materials came from the Soviet-occupied Polish territories.

Supplying the Germans with war material was in perfect compliance with the Soviet policy. Even after the outbreak of the War the Kremlin insisted that "a strong Germany is an indispensable condition for a durable peace in Europe." (*Commissar V. Molotov*, October 31, 1939).

WORDS.

"The Soviet Constitution established a Soviet-Polish frontier corresponding with the desires of the population . . . expressed in a plebiscite carried out on broad democratic principles in the year 1939."

Declaration of the Soviet Government
January 11, 1944

DEEDS.

The desires of the population were neatly expressed in "one-ticket election," the type of election well-known in the totalitarian states. The election was conducted under the protection of large units of the Red Army and in the persuasive presence of over 300,000 of agitators and political officers brought from Russia. To assure a complete success for the election, the more active elements among the local population were ruthlessly repressed before the election through widespread arrests and deportations to the Soviet Union. In some localities the Russian troops rounded up the constituents and escorted them to the polls. Non wonder the "election" was a success: 95 % of the electorate voted on the Soviet list.

Among the candidates, elected to represent the local population, were Commissar V. Molotov and Marshal K. Voroshilov. With the hearty approval of these "representatives" and the like of them, Eastern Poland was "unanimously" incorporated in the Soviet Union.

WORDS.

The outbreak of the German-Soviet war showed Russia how mistaken her friendship with Germany had been and caused her to annul the treaty of Poland's partition.

" The Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics recognizes that the Soviet-German treaties of 1939 relative to territorial changes in Poland have lost their validity."

Polish-Soviet Agreement

July 30, 1941

DEEDS.

As soon as the German lightning march in Russia had been stopped the Soviet Government advanced its claims to Poland's eastern territories. Title to these claims could be based only on the Ribbentrop-Molotov partition of Poland of 1939.

WORDS.

" . . . Peoples of the Soviet Union have very friendly feeling toward the people of Poland."

Ivan Maisky, Soviet Ambassador in London

July, 30, 1941

DEEDS.

This "friedliness" was expressed in many ways:

mass arrests

deportation into the depths of Russia of over a million Polish citizens

detention in forced labor camps in Russia

death sentences

single-handed decision of the Soviet Government (January 16, 1943) which forced Soviet citizenship on hundreds of thousands of Poles deported to Russia

starvation of these people through refusal to permit the distribution of relief goods and through the refusal to let the Poles leave the U.S.S.R.

WORDS.

Among other United Nations the Soviet Government signed the Atlantic Charter. In the very first paragraphs of the Charter the signatories declared that:

" Their countries seek no aggrandizement, territorial or other."

" They desire to see no territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned."

DEEDS.

Since the outbreak of World War II, the U.S.S.R. annexed the following territories with complete disregard of the wishes of the population:

Half of Poland

Part of Rumania

Part of Finland

Whole state of Lithuania

Whole state of Latvia

Whole state of Estonia.

On many occasions and without any constraint whatsoever, the Soviet Government stated that under no circumstances would it relinquish these lands that it considers them as part of the Soviet Union.

WORDS.

By the terms of the Polish-Soviet Agreement of July 30, 1941, the Soviets declared their willingness to establish full military cooperation:

" . . . The two Governments mutually undertake to render one another aid and support of all kinds in the present war against Hitlerite Germany."

DEEDS.

The agreement between the Polish and Soviet Governments provided for the creation in Russia of a Polish army recruited from among the Poles deported there during the period of Soviet-German friendship. This army was to count 123,000 men.

Soviet authorities made it impossible to carry out this agreement because the allotted the Polish Army only onethird of food rations agreed upon and did not supply the Poles with either arms or equipment.

To escape starvation, the Polish forces had to be evacuated from Russia to the territories controlled by the Western Allies. They were equipped and trained there, after which they took a distinguished part in the Italian campaign (Monte Cassino, Ancona, Bologna).

It is to these soldiers who won the highest praise of the Allied commanders that the Soviets have denied the right to return to Poland and against whom they direct their cheap insults.

WORDS.

" The interests of Poland and the Soviet Union lie in the establishment of firm and friendly relations between our two countries and in the unity of the Soviet and Polish peoples for the struggle against the common outside enemy, as the common cause of all the Allies requires."

Declaration of the Soviet Government
January 11, 1944

DEEDS.

When the Red Army approached the Polish frontiers, the Polish Government in London instructed the Polish Home Army to collaborate with the Soviet forces in their struggle against the Germans.

This order—despite the discouraging experiences of the past—was

fully carried out. The Polish Home Army, led by General Bor-Komorowski, assisted the Soviets in taking all the larger towns in Poland. This military assistance was warmly welcomed and made use of by commanders of the Red Army.

But once victory won, the units of the Polish Home Army were disarmed by the Russians, and officers and men either forced into Russian-led units, or thrown into concentration camps. A part of these Polish divisions has been deported to Russia. There were even cases of execution.

At the same time Soviet propaganda did not hesitate to accuse the Polish soldiers fighting the Germans of "fascism," "reactionism," "collaboration with Hitler" and of all the seven deadly sins. These slanders tried to justify before the world the Soviet outrages.

WORDS.

On July 30, 1944, as the Red Army approached Warsaw gates, Moscow broadcast the following battle-cry, thirteenth in a series of similar appeals:

" . . . People of Warsaw! To arms! The whole population should gather round the Underground Army. Attack the Germans... Assist the Red Army to cross the Vistula... More than a million inhabitants ought to become an army of a million men fighting for liberation and destroying the German invaders... "

DEEDS.

The Polish Home Army started the open fight against the Germans in Warsaw on August 1, 1944. The entire civilian population of the capital supported the struggle. The Western Allies offered to fly supplies of food and ammunition to Warsaw.

But the Soviets did not cooperate. They refused shuttle-bases to the American Flying Fortresses and RAF planes bringing help to the embattled Polish capital. The Soviet fighters did not engage the Germans. Despite appeals for supplies, Soviet planes brought no help to Warsaw until the 45th day of the battle, when its outcome was doomed.

So after 63 days of lone fighting the Warsaw Uprising was quelled by the Germans. The Polish casualties amounted to 250,000 people. The city of Warsaw was razed to the ground.

WORDS.

" . . . We have not and cannot have such war aims as imposing our will and our regime on the Slavs and other enslaved peoples of Europe who are awaiting our aid. Our aid consists in assisting these people in

their liberation struggle against Hitler tyranny and then setting them free to rule their own land as they desire. No intervention whatever in the internal affairs of other peoples."

Marshal Joseph Stalin
November 6, 1941

DEEDS.

Allegedly to assure for herself security against defeated Germany, the Soviet Russia deems it necessary to rule Central-Eastern Europe through Soviet stooges.

In Poland, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Carpathian Ruthenia and Eastern Slovakia, the Sovietized regime is being introduced assiduously.

In all these countries we meet the well-known earmarks of the Soviet totalitarian regime:

- Terror of dictatorship
- Minority rule of the Communist Party
- Moscow dictated press and radio
- All-powerful Russian secret police
- Abolishment of freedom of assembly
- Ban of allied observers and newsmen
- Lowered standard of living.

WORDS.

"The Soviet Union has concluded pacts of mutual assistance with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania that are of major political significance... These pacts are based on mutual respect for the political, social and economic structure of the contracting parties, and are designed to strengthen the basis for peaceful, neighborly cooperation between our peoples. We stand for the scrupulous and punctilious observance of pacts on a basis of complete reciprocity, and we declare that all nonsense about sovietizing the Baltic countries is only to the interest of our common enemies and of all anti-Soviet provocateurs..."

Commissar Vyacheslav Molotov
October 31, 1939

DEEDS.

This statement was made only three days after the Lithuanians occupied the north-eastern part of Poland with the city of Wilno, illegally ceded to them by Russia.

They could not enjoy this "Greek gift" for a long time as a few months later the whole of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia was swallowed by the Soviet Union in flagrant violation of Mr. Molotov's pledge to respect their

independence and their social system. The inclusion of the three Baltic Republics was voted in fake "elections" under the pressure of the Red Army.

Now the Soviet regime reigns supreme in this entire region.

WORDS.

"... After the Red Army has beaten the Germans on Russian soil it will enter Polish territory and help to chase the Germans out of Poland and then it will immediately return these lands to the Polish Government."

Marshal J. Stalin to Polish Ambassador T. Romer
February 26, 1943

DEEDS.

Two months after the above-quoted promise had been made, the Soviet Government severed diplomatic relations with the Polish Government.

When the Red Army entered Poland in 1944, the Soviets created a puppet "Polish Provisional Government" composed mostly of Communists, and handed over to this body the whole civil administration. This act was a glaring violation not only of international law, but also of all democratic principles. Communists in Poland never counted more than 2 % of the entire population. Therefore, this was typical "minority rule."

To camouflage this creation before public opinion, a certain number of Communists and fellow-travelers had been assigned to organize fictitious groups bearing names of the old-established political parties, enjoying public confidence, such as Socialists, Peasants, Democrats, etc. The Communist Party camouflaged itself under the name of Polish Workers' Party.

WORDS.

"The dissolution of the Communist International is proper because it exposes the lie of the Hitlerites to the effect that Moscow allegedly intends to intervene in the life of the other nations and to Bolshevize them. An end is now being put to this lie."

Marshal Joseph Stalin
May 28, 1943

DEEDS.

The man who officially heads the Soviet-sponsored "Polish Provisional Government" is Boleslaw Bierut, a professional Communist International agent and a Soviet citizen since 1921. Before the War Bierut acted on

behalf of the Comintern in Eastern Europe under the names of Krasnodebski, Bienkowski and Rutkowski.

The noted correspondent of the *New York Times*, C. L. Sulzberger, reported on May 28, 1945, that behind this group of Soviet stooges which composes the "Provisional Government" stands another member of the Communist International Executive and friend of Commissar Molotov, Saul Amsterdam, using a number of pseudonyms: Amsterdamski, Henrykowski, Saulski, Comrade Jan and Comrade Krzysztof.

The prominent American writer, W. H. Chamberlin, said: "Decent and patriotic Poles feel about such a regime as decent and patriotic Americans would have felt if Stalin had appointed an American 'Government' headed by Earl Browder, with some assistance from Scarface Al Capone."

WORDS.

"The Soviet Government has repeatedly declared that it stands for the re-establishment of a strong and independent Poland and for friendship between the Soviet Union and Poland."

Declaration of the Soviet Government
January 11, 1944

In a conversation with Rev. St. Orlemanski, pro-Soviet priest of Springfield, Mass., Marshal Stalin declared that he desires not only a strong and independent, but also a "democratic" Poland (April 1944).

DEEDS.

Poland is "strong" now—

—because she is ruled by iron hand of the Soviet secret police, the "NKVD" and large contingents of the Red Army.

Poland is "independent" now—

—because her government is appointed by Russia and every decision concerning her fate is taken in Moscow.

Poland is "democratic" now—

—because every citizen who dares to differ in his views from the Soviet-sponsored authorities is jailed, put in a concentration camp or deported to Russia.

WORDS

"... (The Polish question) is so important, especially to the Soviet Union, that we shall give all our efforts to the solution. It must not be done without consulting the Poles. I think it is not possible at all to settle the Poles without the Poles."

Commissar Vyacheslav Molotov
April 26, 1945

DEEDS.

At the end of February 1945, the Soviets invited for conversations the four ministers of the Polish Government in London who carried out their duties within Poland, the last C-in-C of the recently dissolved Home Army, the Chairman of the Polish wartime parliament, and eight representatives of the major Polish political parties. The invited Polish Underground leaders were assured of personal safety and even promised a plane to go to London to consult with the Polish Government there.

After the first meeting took place on March 27, long silence followed. Only under the pressure of public opinion five weeks after the meeting, Commissar Molotov announced casually in San Francisco, that the missing Poles had been put in jail by the Soviets.

The case in question makes it clear that the Russians do not wish to consult the genuine leaders of the Polish public opinion. The Soviet tactic precludes the talks with all but the hand-picked few who for one reason or another prove pliant to the Soviet wishes.

The list of broken pledges and belied promises might be enlarged indefinitely. But there is no point in quoting more Soviet declarations. Truth is not found in suave words. Truth is found in the cruel reality which rules Poland and the rest of Eastern Europe today.

Freedom-gained by the nations of Central-Eastern Europe often after many years of hard struggle—is now being strangled to give place to foreign domination.

Human rights, won in the course of long social evolution, are tramped upon today by Russian boots, and superseded with the rule of the Soviet police.

Democracy—budding in some of these countries, flowering in others, prayed for in all—is thrown into the mud and totalitarian regime is taking its place.

The standard of living—achieved through long hard work of years, lowered by the German exploitation, is now being pulled down to the Soviet level of existence: bare feet and black bread.

Freedom of thought and expression—is made a caricature of, with purges and deportations paving the way for "free elections," amazing in their "unanimous" acclaim of the Soviets.

The Soviets "liberated" this part of Europe only to integrate it into their broad scheme of Communist expansion. In their cynicism the Germans announced their plans openly; the Russians are acting under a shroud of conspiracy, to deceive the outside world. This policy is not merely a violation of all the principles for which this war has been and is being fought, but also constitutes a direct threat to the future peace.

Reprinted from the pamphlet « Not as good as it sounds » New York.

"The United States Government stands unequivocally for a strong, free, and independent Polish state with the untrammled right of the Polish people to order their internal existence as they see fit."

Edward R. Stettinius, Jr.
December 18, 1944

"On the Continent of Europe we have yet to make sure that the simple and honorable purposes for which we entered the war are not brushed aside or overlooked in the months following our success and that the words 'freedom,' 'democracy' and 'liberation' are not distorted from their true meaning as we have understood them.

"There would be little use in punishing the Hitlerites for their crimes, if law and justice did not rule and if totalitarian or police governments were to take place of the German invaders."

Winston S. Churchill
May 13, 1945

Definitions of democracy vary widely, but certain essential elements are agreed upon by all.

There must be freedom of "political opposition," which implies freedom of speech, of the press, of popular assemblage.

Communists demand all of these freedoms in the U.S.A., but none are tolerated in the U.S.S.R.

Let Stalin, quoting Lenin, give the proof:

"The class which has seized political power has done so conscious of the fact that it has seized power alone. This is implicit in the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat. This concept has meaning only when one class knows that it alone takes political power into its own hands, and does not deceive either itself or others by talk about popular, elected government, sanctified by the whole people."

Is this democracy or tyranny?

From "Communism today or Red Fascism" by Rev. Raymond T. Feely - University of San Francisco.

Speaking for England

(Russia has demanded, that the Polish Army in Italy shall be disbanded).

- " All recent moves remind us of the fact
- " There was no war—till Russia was attacked
- " And thing that seemed to us to matter most —
- " Join Hitler—now along forgotten ghost.
- " For new diplomacy has shown the flaws
- " In any claim we led a holy cause.
- " Thus Russia now indignantly demands
- " The Polish Army trustingly disbands.
- " Their crime, of course, is easy to define—
- " They fought with us in nineteenthirtynine."

Lester B. Wilson in " Sunday Dispatch."

BRITISH DEMOCRATS!

YOU HAVE A DUTY TO THE POLES!

by AUBERON HERBERT

The Polish problem in varying forms and degrees of urgency has been perennially with us since September 1939, surviving Teheran, Yalta and every other attempt to solve it. Like a neglected tooth, it has been gingerly doctored with temporary fillings from time to time, and otherwise as far as possible ignored. To the long suffering British public, the varying fortunes of the London Polish Government and its Lublin rival and the manoeuvres of M. Mikolajczyk may by now seem trivial and tedious, but to millions of Poles, these things are literally matters of life and death.

I have had, for an Englishman, exceptional opportunities of becoming acquainted with the views and feelings of the average Polish soldier. Three years ago, on failing to pass the British medical tests, I enlisted in the ranks of the Polish Army, in which I have served as private and lance-corporal until I received my commission six months ago. I was with the first Polish Armoured Division throughout its continental campaign, and have a representative collection of friends in all branches of the Polish forces both in this country, Germany and Italy. I have been frequently asked by many friends in the Polish Army to try to put forward their point of view in the English press, and am very glad of this opportunity to do so, since I feel that the views of these men, who fought so well by our side, have received less attention than they deserve.

While, for example, it is generally known, that the vast majority of the Polish troops in exile are extremely reluctant to return to Poland, one may scour the columns of the daily press without being able to find out why this is so. Yet men, who have endured long and difficult years of exile, do not abandon hope of returning to their country for frivolous reasons. The factors influencing the Poles towards this very grave decision are, in outline, the following.

In effect, Poland has exchanged a German occupation for a Russian one. The Yalta Settlement has produced neither free institutions nor

ordinary civic liberties; its effect has been rather the reverse. The Polish Provisional Government may be accounted a classical example of "swindle democracy". Its President, M. Bierut, is a former Pole, who embraced Soviet nationality in 1923; in succeeding years he has filled various positions in the hierarchy of the Comintern. In the Government over which President Bierut presides, M. Mikolajczyk and his democratic colleagues form a small minority, fighting a losing battle. The remainder of the Government is made up of Communists, disguised under the names of pre-war democratic parties. They are actively engaged in Sovietising Poland, sometimes openly, as in the army, sometimes under a democratic camouflage.

The Agrarian Reforms offer a typical example of the latter technique. The land has been parcelled up into ten-acre holdings, much too small to be farmed economically. The peasant has neither horses nor farm equipment, since all that has not been taken eastwards as the spoils of the Russian Victory has been impounded by the Government. Thus he is faced with the choice of starving on his ten-acre cabbage patch or of "volunteering" as sweated labour for the local collective farm. Life in Poland is dominated by the Russian Political Police (N.K.V.D.) and its Polish subsidiary, the Security Service. These organisations are more feared than the Gestapo, since they are quite as ruthless, and incomparably more efficient. The Russian entry into Poland was followed by a wave of mass arrests and deportations involving all those who might potentially be opposed to Communism. Those chiefly affected were the Home Army and officials of the underground administration, together with prominent adherents of the London Government, Army Officers, intelligentsia, and former officials. East of the Curzon line, "Social Engineering" on a massive scale took place; tens of thousands of Poles were dispatched to labour camps in Asiatic Russia; often families were split up men being sent to one destination, women to another, and children to Communist school camps. Previous experience gives little grounds for optimism as to their fate.

By these and similar methods, the Russians and the few Poles who support them, have entirely destroyed the social fabric of Poland, thus completing the work started by the Germans. Now that this result has been attained, and all potential opposition to the Government crushed, the mass terror is diminishing in scale, but the essential totalitarian controls remain. Anyone may be arrested on suspicion of even passive hostility to the Government—proof is not necessary. The higher ranks of the army are largely staffed by Poles born and brought up in Russia, all of them politically trained; the civilian administration is less directly, but quite as effectively, controlled. The gradual withdrawal of the Red Army, now taking place, will remove an intolerable burden from the

shoulders of a country near starvation, but the situation cannot be fundamentally improved as long as the N.K.V.D. remains.

The reader, to whom some of these facts may be unfamiliar, may question their authenticity. I can only say that what I have written is, if anything, an under-statement, and based entirely on the accounts of people who have recently succeeded in leaving Poland. Poles of all sorts and conditions are trying in ever increasing quantities to percolate through the iron curtain, in order to breathe free air. Even peasants who bore the brunt of the German occupation are unable to endure the new régime. All of them tell the same grim story. Such is the background against which the Polish soldier must make his decision.

He is faced with a cruel dilemma; either he must prolong his exile and dog " and knows that as a soldier of President Raczkiewicz, he must throw himself on the uncertain mercies of M. Bierut. He has heard himself described by the Warsaw radio as a " Fascist cannibal and dog" and knows that as a soldier of President Raczkiewicz, he will be in the highest degree suspect. In Soviet eyes his intimate connection with the " bourgeois " West makes him tainted meat, highly allergic to a supersensitive political digestion, and likely to be treated accordingly. Many soldiers have received letters smuggled from Poland, imploring them not to endanger unnecessarily their own lives, and the lives of their families. In general, the reaction of Polish soldiers is much the same as one might expect of an average patriotic Englishman, *mutatis mutandis*. They are prepared to face the rigours of an indefinite exile, and to deny themselves all that is dear to them, until such time as they may return to Poland as free men to a free country.

In all fundamentals, the Pole is an individualist, not to be brow-beaten into any course of action against his better judgment, however many people may assure him that it is for his own good. The suggestion brought forward by Russian propaganda, that Polish Officers are bringing undue pressure to bear in order to dissuade their soldiers from returning, is both untrue and offensive. It is surely self-evident that, under these circumstances, every man must decide for himself. During my two years' service in the ranks, I never personally came into contact with any attempt on the part of the officers to dictate to their men politically. I feel certain that any such attempt would be strongly resented, and would defeat its own object.

It should equally be borne in mind that the well intentioned exhortations of Mr. Bevin and others, urging the army to return and take its rightful place in Poland, will fall on deaf ears until Mr. Mikolajczyk's policy produces concrete results in the form of those elementary human rights and simple liberties which are the air that we breathe in England.

Thus it may be safely assumed that, under prevailing conditions, a

large number of Poles will remain in exile—at a rough guess, probably about 500.000. This group may be divided into three component elements: the armed forces, the Home Army and former prisoner-of-war, and those of the "Displaced Persons" in Germany who will not wish to go home. Let us consider these elements separately.

The armed forces number, all in all, about a quarter of a million men. At the highest computation, not more than fifty thousand of these are likely to return under existing conditions. Under the plebiscite recently conducted by the British Military Authorities, 22.000 out of the 75.000 Polish troops in Scotland volunteered to go home; from General Anders' Corps in Italy, 14.000 out of a possible 120.000; from the 1st Armoured Division and Parachute Brigade in Germany, 500 out of 20.000. From the Air Force and Navy the numbers scarcely run into three figures.

These figures should not be taken as final, as this situation is without precedent, and there are many imponderabilia which it is, as yet, too early to assess. One can, however, make certain deductions from the varying characteristics of the three elements of which, by and large, the Polish Army is composed.

First in order of appearance are the men who fought in Poland in 1939, escaped after the September campaign to fight in France in 1940, and, after the French Armistice, made their way to this country. From this source is drawn the bulk of the 1st Armoured Division which, after four years' training in Scotland earned its battle honours at Falaise, in the capture of Breda, and during the campaign in North West Germany. In the Parachutist Brigade, which took part in the Arnhem action, in the Navy and Air Force, this material also preponderates and gives colour to the whole.

During the last five years, these troops have worked in very close contact with the British and have learned a great deal in this country. In many ways, their outlook has become Anglicised. Most of them have taught themselves to speak some English, and have numerous friends in this country. In politics, they are independent in outlook, and moderate but steadfast in their judgment; they prize personal freedom as highly as any Englishman. Up till now, not more than one per cent have shown themselves ready to accept M. Bierut's invitation.

Next in order of arrival are 70.000 of the many Poles, both civilian and military, interned by the Russians after the Red Army had joined in the German attack on Poland in 1939. These men were imprisoned in labour camps spread all over the expanse of Asiatic Russia from the Urals to Vladivostock, but mostly concentrated in Arctic Siberia. From this predicament they were rescued by the Russo-Polish agreement of 1941, negotiated by General Sikorski. A Polish Army of 70.000 was formed

on Russian soil under the command of General Anders, and subsequently moved to the Middle East, by way of Persia, in order to strengthen the British forces in that area. This force was amalgamated with the Carpathian Brigade, which had taken part in the siege of Tobruk, and formed into the Polish Second Corps, which has since, at the storming of Monte Cassino, the capture of Ancona and other notable actions, played such a prominent part in the Italian campaign.

The immense prestige of General Anders is due not only to the fact that he is a brilliant soldier and leader of men, but that, in the eyes of his men, it is he and General Sikorski, who saved them from the gates of hell. It took fully six months of careful dieting before the former internees who arrived in Persia were able to regain anything approaching their ex-weight and strength. The mental scars inflicted during their confinement may never be healed. I have frequently heard first-hand descriptions of life in Siberia; it has a quality of horror all its own. The Russians do not, in general, indulge in sadistic brutalities of the kind made infamous by the Germans at Oswiecim and Dachau; it is simply that they do not treat their prisoners as human beings, nor even as we are accustomed to treat animals. A man's daily task, for example, consists of cutting down a very large number of trees, far more than would be considered a possible day's work in the country. If he accomplishes this task, well and good; at the end of the day he receives rather over a pound of unpalatable black bread and a bowl of cabbage soup made without meat. If, on the other hand, he only accomplished eighty per cent of the day's task, then this scanty ration is correspondingly diminished. Those too weak to work, and no longer capable of serving an economic purpose, are not fed at all. Russia is a strange country, with little emotion to waste on the fate of "dupes of the Polish landlords and Fascist reactionaries." Many of the prisoners-of-war, in fact eighteen-year-old peasant boys and industrial workers, were held on political charges and given preposterous ten-year sentences as "enemies of the people." During the whole period of their confinement the Poles were subjected to intense and unrelenting Marxist propaganda; its effect was minimised, however, by practical experience of the Soviet Paradise.

It is especially terrible to endure all these things at the hands of the people who do not hate one, or indeed, care what one thinks or says, but who think of one only in terms of production statistics. Many Poles remember prison life in Russia as a form of burial alive, by which they will be haunted until their dying day. It is superfluous to indicate their reactions on being asked to return to a Soviet-dominated Poland.

The most recent source of recruitment to the Polish Forces has been from among Poles inhabiting the western districts of Poland, incorporated by Hitler into the greater German Reich. There are for the most part

very young, forcibly abstracted from their homes in Silesia and Pomerania at an average age of fourteen and compulsory recruited into the Reichswehr. Their schooling was then still incomplete, and they had been educated to think of themselves as Germans and subjected to plentiful Nazi propaganda. As a result of this very different background, their roots in the country are far less deep than those of the other groups mentioned above, and a large proportion of them have voted in favour of returning immediately to Poland. Those of them who have seen service in Russia, and know the Russians, show noticeably less enthusiasm for this course of action. The majority of those willing to return is to be found among the former members of the German Parachutist formations fighting in Italy. This class, as a whole, constitutes the vast majority of those who have elected to return.

At this juncture I feel it necessary to lay a certain emphasis on one point. While the British Foreign Office would appear to be ready to use its influence in persuading the Poles to return to conditions which it knows to be far from ideal, though stopping short of any form of compulsion, the Polish General Staff in London, equally stopping short of any form of compulsion, is unwilling to urge the men for whom it is responsible to return to the present-day Poland.

The position of the Polish Home Army now hidden in the forests of Poland, or subsisting under conditions of semi-internment and near-starvation in camps scattered all over Germany, is one of particular hardship. Inside Poland the vast majority of the Home Army is living underground, as during the German occupation. From time to time, the Provisional Government grants a general amnesty coupled with exhortations urging these men to declare themselves, but these amnesties are often followed by intensive police activity. These facts are well known to those of the defenders of Warsaw now in Germany.

In the British and American Zones in Germany there are still over a hundred thousand soldiers of the Home Army, living in the same camps in which the Germans had interned them. Through force of circumstances, their material condition is still of the poorest, and although granted the rights of combatant soldiers during the battle of Warsaw, in general, they do not receive the privileges and higher ration scale of former prisoners of war. Furthermore, the efforts of their countrymen to better their situation are largely frustrated. A principle of British policy of dealing with the Poles in exile is to permit nothing which might induce them or encourage them to remain outside Poland. While under German domination they had a superfluity of work and time did not lie idle on their hands; now, however, they are in greater or lesser degree confined to their camps and barracks with nothing to occupy their minds and hands other than the anxiety over the fate of their families and friends in Poland.

As the Home Army represents the élite of the Polish people, it is a particularly sore trial that, save those fortunate enough to be within easy reach of the 1st Armoured Division or of the 2nd Polish Corps in Austria and Northern Italy, they are cut off from all contact with their countrymen. Emissaries from the Warsaw government they do not wish to receive; every difficulty is placed in the way of the Polish General Staff in London and its contact officers who wish to provide them with educational facilities or vocational training.

Whether or not just in its object, this British policy is, in practice, inhuman in application. It affects not only the Home Army, but the million "displaced persons" and ex-prisoners-of-war. Without freedom of movement, devoid of or any reliable news, these people live on a diet of insufficient vitamins, enforced idleness, and fantastic rumours. While taking fully into account the chaotic conditions existing in Germany, it must be frankly stated that the treatment meted by U.N.R.R.A. has on many occasions been far from sympathetic. Episodes like the tragic Paderborn trial may be expected to recur in ever-increasing quantities. This situation is in itself conducive to demoralisation, and no constructive steps have been taken by the British Authorities to avert a state of affairs which, by the end of this winter, may make Chicago under Al Capone seem like child's play. Cases of great individual hardship abound. I could quote instances of children swept by the tide of war into German labour camps, who since the liberation have been refused permission to join their parents in London. Their parents, former Polish Government officials, have been refused permission to send them money; if they go in person they are unlikely to be re-admitted to this country. Such things seem scarcely credible, but unhappily take place.

Few from the ranks of the Home Army and from among the former prisoners of war show any willingness to sample the Bierut régime. Indeed, many who have done so have returned as quickly as the devious means at their disposal allowed, fully confirming the stories which were first brought back by our own prisoners from Poland. By both Polish and British estimates, up to 70 per cent of the Polish former slave-workers in Germany are eager to return to Poland as quickly as possible. The decision of these people, for the most part workmen, is actuated not by any enthusiasm for the new régime, but by the degree of their present misery, which seems to them greater now than under German rule. They had expected much from liberation, and have been correspondingly disappointed by the reality. Many of these hardships could be mitigated if the British Government would allow the Polish Military Authorities to take a larger share in the organisation of their welfare.

What, then, are the prospects of the great number of Poles who would endure any hardship in exile rather than return to a Soviet-dominated

Poland? In a great degree the answer depends upon British public opinion. Although it would still be premature to assess the circumstances and policies which produced such a state of affairs, it is now evident that we can do little to help our first and most faithful ally, Poland. The fact should speak for itself that, while Mr. Bevin was able at the recent Conference of Foreign Ministers to speak up for our former enemies, Bulgaria, Roumania and Hungary, he maintained complete silence, so far as is known, over our friends in Yugoslavia and Poland. However, there still remains one aspect of the Polish problem which is soluble: the fate of the Poles in exile. The Pole does not turn to this country as a suppliant asking to be accepted as a pensioner. Far from harbouring any bitterness or pretensions with regard to this country, the Poles cherish for England the feelings inspired by a long and happy comradeship in arms. All that they now hope for is that the British Government will give them the opportunity of making their living in a free country. Only the small number of Poles with definite prospects in this country will wish to remain here. It should be clearly realised that, as regards the chances of the remainder for employment and settlement overseas, the influence and active goodwill of the British Government will in many respects prove a decisive factor. The hopes of the Poles, are pinned upon Mr. Churchill's offer of British citizenship, and the concern over their future which it betrayed. It is only a callous or bureaucratic conscience which can face these facts unmoved. For the sake of our own honour, let us, like the Poles, hope that the traditional generosity of a great power will come to the aid of our friends in distress.

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In the soldier's mess of the HQ of the Foreign Legion in North Africa there is the following inscription:

"Alcohol kills. But the Legionary does not fear death".

"Where did you get that black eye?"

"You know that pretty little woman we said was a widow?"

"Yes".

"Well she isn't".

MEMORIAL ON AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

*To Hon. JAMES F. BYRNES
Secretary of State of the United States
From the Polish American Congress*

The Polish American Congress has addressed memoranda on American foreign policy to your predecessors in Office, Messrs. Hull and Stettinius.

We note with regret that the contents of the memoranda were disregarded by the Administration, which continued a policy of sacrificing American ideals, as expressed in the Atlantic Charter and the Four Freedoms, to the insatiable annexationist demands of the Soviet Union.

We note with still greater regret that the course of events has justified our warnings. Although the military power of Germany and Japan has been broken, we are still far from the ideal of a peaceful and orderly world. The fact that President Truman has found it necessary to recommend universal military training is clear proof that we are not out of the international danger zone. Another sign of the times was the deadlock at the London conference of Foreign Ministers, despite your own eminently conciliatory attitude and obvious desire to meet the Soviet negotiators halfway.

Part of the responsibility for the present unfortunate state of affairs must be laid at the door of Mr. Roosevelt's Administration. Appeasement of Stalin was carried far beyond the real needs of military cooperation with Russia. There was too much secret diplomacy. Irresponsible personal agents were allowed to make important decisions, often with little regard for American moral and legal obligations.

We hope it will be your honorable role, Mr. Secretary, to repair the harm which has been done and to set American foreign policy on a course of firmness, honor and dignity which will lay the foundations of an enduring peace. We applaud your refusal to sacrifice American principles for the sake of an empty show of agreement at London.

The limitations which the war with the Axis powers imposed on our diplomacy have disappeared. Sober thought has been aroused by the expansionist designs which the Soviet Government revealed at London and by the persistent failure to implement those promises of establishing

free and democratic regimes in countries liberated from Nazi tyranny which were freely given at the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers and at the Yalta Conference.

A wise use of our incomparable national wealth can check the advance of totalitarianism. Joint American, British and Canadian possession of the secret of the atomic bomb assures us time to work vigorously for a peace based on justice without being exposed to sudden aggression.

It is our intention in writing to you, Sir, to point out how Americans of Polish descent, possessing as we do the priceless heritage of the struggle of our ancestors against tyranny, believe that a change from the disastrous policy of appeasing totalitarianism to an independent, consistent American foreign policy is absolutely necessary.

1. The events and developments of the last year have reinforced our belief in the validity of certain ideas which found expression as follows in our memorial to Mr. Cordell Hull last year:

"We understand that the purpose of the Atlantic Charter was to base the present and future security of the United States upon the political materialization of the centuries-old 'spiritual community of nations' of Western civilization. This natural fraternity of many peoples, bound by a historic unity of ideals, when opened to those who accept as obligatory the moral principles resulting therefrom, would be sufficiently strong to assure lasting peace.

"The solidarity of the nations of Western culture is an inherent fact. It has its origin in historic developments, which in the Americas and in most parts of Europe spring from a common source and flow toward a common idealistic end, endeavoring to create societies founded upon the priority of law over force.

"As we see it, the ground for such an association of nations is incorporated in the Atlantic Charter, which appeals to solidarity in the name of principles which, if excluded from life, would make peace depend upon an unending armaments race".

2. Unfortunately during the period 1943-45 the policy of the United States has tended to alienate many peoples who would have been natural allies and partners in a world association of free peoples. There is every indication that President Roosevelt at Teheran accepted in fact, if not in name, the principle of dividing Europe into Russian and British spheres of influence. Ten properly independent nations, Poland, Yugoslavia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Rumania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Czechoslovakia were left to the Soviet sphere of influence. The combined populations of these lands is about 120,000,000, of which figure Poland accounted for 35,000,000.

Communist domination of these countries has been achieved by various methods. Direct annexation has been employed in connection with the Baltic Republics, Eastern Poland, part of Finland, Bessarabia, Bukovina and eastern Czechoslovakia. In other cases, puppet governments, similar in composition to the Nazi Quisling regimes, have been set up with the active aid of the Red Army and of experienced Communist agitators and secret police agents. It is noteworthy that, despite the small numbers of Communists in these countries before the war, trusted Communists are almost invariably found in key positions, such as the Ministries of Interior, controlling the police, and of Education, controlling propaganda.

It is rather alarming to note that the virtual absorption of this huge area (together with large parts of Germany and Austria) by the Soviet Union gives Stalin a much larger number of unwilling subjects and greater stores of natural resources than Hitler had acquired when France and England decided that further Nazi aggression must be stopped by force.

All these peoples have demonstrated by their history that they belong and desire to belong to Western civilization. They cherish their historic institutions and national independence. Poland has struggled against both German and Russian aggression. The heroic fight of Finland against Soviet invasion in 1939-40 is paralleled by the gallant resistance of Jugoslavia and Greece to German and Italian attack.

Yalta marked a further retreat of democracy before totalitarianism. For here the American and British leaders signed away the sovereignty and territorial independence of a faithful ally, the people of Poland. In clear violation of the self-determination clauses of the Atlantic Charter almost one half of Poland's territory was assigned to the Soviet Union without any impartial plebiscite or consultation of the will of the people. At the same time steps were taken to withdraw recognition from the legitimate Polish Government in London in favor of a so-called "government of national unity." When this government was finally formed in June, 1945, its membership was composed overwhelmingly of Communists and Soviet agents, with only two or three representatives of independent Polish parties being admitted to subordinate posts for the sake of window-dressing.

The United States and Great Britain also retreated from the principles of international democracy and self determination of peoples by recognizing the terrorist dictatorship of the Communist International agent, "Marshal" Josip Broz Tito, as the legitimate government of Jugoslavia.

We welcome your firm stand at London and elsewhere for the holding of free and honest elections as a condition of recognizing the governments of Rumania and Bulgaria. But we suggest that there is something

incongruous in demanding full freedom for former enemy peoples like the Bulgarians and Rumanians while conniving at the ruthless disregard of the most elementary liberties by Soviet-controlled puppet regimes in countries where the peoples fought for the United Nations cause, as in Poland and Jugoslavia.

3. While the peoples of Eastern Europe were left to the mercy of the Soviet dictatorship, the United States Government neglected many steps which would have led to a firm integration of the European peoples outside the sphere of Soviet influence into a democratic bloc. French feeling was offended by the exclusion of that country, a keystone in the new order in Western Europe, from such important conferences as Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam.

America has apparently favored the policy in Western Europe of accepting Communists, fifth column agents of Moscow, as members of the governments of the countries of this area. This policy is likely to yield bitter fruits in the future.

In short, American policy in Europe from Teheran to London has involved a considerable loss of national prestige and has alienated some of our natural allies. The peoples of Eastern Europe have reason to feel that they have been left without protection against Soviet imperialism. The peoples of Western Europe have reason to fear the lack of a firm consistent American policy of building up a democratic bloc in that part of the continent.

UNRRA was a worthy and necessary effort to save human lives and repair material damage in the countries which suffered the worst ravages of war. But its operations have been shamefully abused for political purposes in countries under Soviet occupation, notably in Poland and Jugoslavia. The American people have not been properly informed of this incontestable fact.

The policy of constant yielding to Soviet demands has cast a shadow upon our relations with Great Britain. We are convinced that close American-British co-operation is an indispensable condition for a return to the Atlantic Charter and the formation of a group of nations which will be faithful to the principles of the Charter.

4. This policy of constant yielding gravely compromised the practical success of the effort to build a genuine world peace and security organization. For American acceptance of the Soviet insistence that a great power may be judge in its own case, and may, by its sole veto, stop action even against a small power accused of aggression, strikes at the very heart of the principle of collective security, based on genuine international law and justice.

It is a sobering reflection that not one of the major acts of aggres-

sion which took place during the last two decades, the Japanese seizure of Manchuria, the Italian attack on Ethiopia, the German invasion of Poland, the Soviet onslaught against Finland, could have been checked under the present provisions of the United Nations Charter. For in each case the aggressor was a great power which would have been adjudged above the law.

There is still time to undo the blunders of the past. There is reason to believe that Soviet diplomacy at London overshot the mark. There was certainly no intention on the part of the assembled representatives at London to combine against Russia. Yet the overbearing attitude of the Soviet delegation produced a natural reaction in the shape of a solid rock of all countries except two satellite Soviet States.

In spite of the alarming gains of totalitarianism by force and fraud in Eastern Europe, by far the largest part of the world, with the greatest resources and population is still outside Soviet control. Our own country still possesses the enormous advantage of the atomic bomb secret. The Soviet Union has been much more weakened in manpower and resources by the war than the United States and is far from the American level of technical progress. Belief that we must always give in to Russia for fear of war is as unjustified as it is craven. It is desirable for us to "get along" with Stalin, Stalin has a far stronger necessity to "get along" with us. Much of the blackmail we have paid to the Soviet Union in recent years was unnecessary.

In view of these circumstances, you hold in your hands, Mr. Secretary, the power to save the world from division into spheres of freedom and slavery, with the unavoidable consequences of such division: armed conflict between a strengthened totalitarianism and a weakened democracy.

5. The repairing of former mistakes requires first of all a break with the practices of secret diplomacy. A firm consistent policy of advancing liberty and resisting the spread of totalitarianism requires the support of an enlightened public opinion. Pro-Communist fifth column propaganda in this country thrives on secrecy, which makes it possible to misrepresent the actual course of American-Soviet relations.

The excuse of necessary military secrecy has now lost validity. The American people should know the truth, and the whole truth, about the state of international relations. If the American Government continues to keep the American public in ignorance, if official information about Soviet behavior in Europe and Asia is deliberately withheld from the people, the future may hold another Pearl Harbour. Another war, for which we shall not be prepared morally or materially, may burst upon us or upon our children.

But we are confident that the American people can look reality

squarely in the face and that they possess sufficient strength to ward off any danger of which they are made conscious.

6. It is an important task to use our vast economic power to promote our ideals of freedom, justice and self determination in the international field. It is only reasonable that we should use our resources to strengthen those peoples who are our natural allies. It would be criminal madness to employ our wealth to strengthen dictator nations which may become our enemies. For it is in the nature of tyranny to seek to destroy liberty. It would be wise as well as generous to aid the British Commonwealth of Nations and the free peoples of the world with loans and credits on mutually advantageous terms to promote a revival of international commerce and well being.

On the other hand, to supply credits to the Soviet Union would be equivalent to financing a future war against the United States. It should be remembered that, until and unless there is a drastic and unmistakable change in Soviet foreign policy, credits granted to the Soviet Union under any pretext would always directly or indirectly serve the same ends: building up of armaments, oppression of conquered peoples and propaganda against the democratic social order.

7. The formidable discovery of the atomic bomb has made the veto provisions of the United Nations Charter obsolete. American diplomacy should aim at the revision of this Charter in the sense of establishing genuine equality of all sovereign nations and clearly defining aggression and the sanctions which aggression should bring.

8. Finally, the United States Government should place the rule of law above the rule of force. There should be, in the language of the Atlantic Charter, no recognition of territorial changes which do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned. We welcome President Truman's unequivocal declarations in his Navy Day speech:

"We shall refuse to recognize any government imposed upon any nation by the force of any foreign power."

"We shall approve no territorial changes in any friendly part of the world unless, they accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned."

We believe that a logical consequence of these principles would be a repudiation by the United States Government of the Yalta Agreement which provided for the partition of Poland and for the imposition on Poland of a "made-in-Moscow" Communist-minded government without any consultation of the wishes of the Polish people. America should again accord recognition to the legal representatives of the Polish people, the constitutional President and Government of the Republic of Poland.

It is significant in this connection that the Soviet Government, on its side, has persistently violated the letter and spirit of the Yalta Agreement, which calls for free unfettered elections with the participation of all democratic parties. There is a mass of evidence from official and unofficial sources of arrests, deportations, restrictions on the liberty of the press and other actions which make "free unfettered elections" a mockery in advance. Further justification for American repudiation of the iniquitous Yalta decisions about Poland may be found in the fact that the Soviet Government has violated, in Poland and many other countries, its pledge after the Moscow conference of Foreign Ministers on October 30, 1943. This pledge, which was also signed by the representatives of the United States, Great Britain and China, is phrased as follows:

"That after the termination of hostilities they will not employ their military forces within the territories of other states except for the purposes envisaged in this declaration and after joint consultation."

The "purposes envisaged in this declaration" certainly do not include oppression of occupied countries, hunting down of patriots, marauding, outrage and organized and unorganized looting. These have been the principal activities of Soviet troops stationed in Poland and the Balkans since the end of the war.

* * *

In conclusion we repeat what we said last year and what is equally true today:

"Whereas it is the foremost task of the U. S. to assure in this war a lasting peace to future generations;

and whereas this can be achieved only by grouping around the U. S. an association of nations of adequate strength;

and whereas the formation of such an association is possible only by basing it on the principles of the priority of right over might and the equality of nations before law upheld by the spirit of solidarity against aggression;

and whereas the principles of the Atlantic Charter represent the proper bases for the foundation of such an organization which, in itself, constitutes the best guarantee of American security;

and whereas the U. S. now powerfully armed and the arsenal of all the United Nations is able to demand of its allies respect for the principles accepted by them, which bring disadvantage to none, give security to ourselves, and promise peace to humanity;

therefore, we Americans of Polish descent solemnly declare that:

Cognizant of the value of the blood spilled by our sons, we demand, in the name of security of present and future generations, firm adherence

to the principles enunciated in the Atlantic Charter, and we deem the clarification of the present international situation as of greater importance than all domestic issues."

The security of the United States is a matter of the most vital importance to every American citizen. It is this security which must be safeguarded by an Administration fully cognizant of the dangers facing our country and in a strong position to be fully able to cope with them.

POLISH AMERICAN CONGRESS, Inc.

Poland has a long tradition of fights against overwhelming odds. It has produced men of courage and initiative. Its Socialist Movement has made many contributions both in personnel and ideas to the common fund of Socialist ideas in the world.

JOHN PARKER, M. P.



